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SHEET 1 ADVANTAGES OF COMPULSORY SERVICE FOR HOME DEFENCE





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"The Path of Duty is the Path of Safety."

THE ADVANTAGES OF COMPULSORY SERVICE FOR HOME DEFENCE,

TOGETHER WITH A CONSIDERATION OF SOME OF THE OBJECTIONS
WHICH MAY BE URGED AGAINST IT.

A LECTURE BY

GEORGE F. SHEE, M.A.,

Delivered at the Royal United Service Institution, Friday, 14th Feb., 1902.

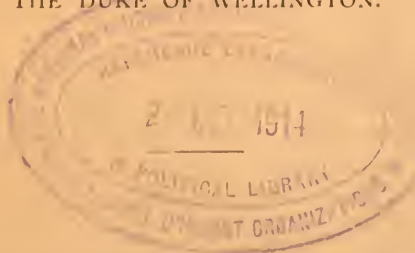
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BY

THE NATIONAL SERVICE LEAGUE.

President—

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.



DACRE HOUSE, VICTORIA STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.

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1. This Association shall be called the "National Service League." Its object shall be to promote the legislative adoption of compulsory naval or military training for National Defence.

2. The general aims of the League shall be :—

- a.* To demonstrate the vital importance to the Empire of having a reserve of trained men both for the Army and for the Navy ;
- b.* To illustrate the physical, moral, and industrial benefits resulting from general naval or military training, and the special need for such training in the case of our large town population ;
- c.* To point out the unnecessary costliness and the inadequacy of any measure, short of general training, which may be put forward with the object of creating reserve forces ;
- d.* To urge these considerations on the public.

3. The League shall be absolutely distinct from all party politics.

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Secretary,

Mr. GEORGE F. SHEE, M.A.

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THE RIGHT HON. LORD NEWTON IN THE CHAIR.

TOGETHER WITH

THE DISCUSSION

Which followed the Lecture on the 14th, 19th, and 21th February.

The Speakers were: Colonel A. M. BROOKFIELD, M.P., Admiral Sir N. BOWDEN-SMITH, K.C.B., Colonel T. H. BAYLIS, K.C., Colonel T. S. CAVE, Sir JOHN COLOMB, K.C.M.G., M.P., The BISHOP OF CHESTER, Mr. CLINTON E. DAWKINS, C.B., Lieut.-Colonel O. T. DUKE, Colonel W. T. DOONER, Admiral Sir E. R. FREMANTLE, G.C.B., C.M.G., Sir ROBERT GIFFEN, K.C.B., Colonel F. GRAVES, Lieut.-Colonel GUNTER, Colonel Viscount HARDINGE, Major W. H. S. HERON-MAXWELL, Lieut.-Colonel R. M. HOLDEN, Sir RALPH H. KNOX, K.C.B., T. MILLER-MAGUIRE Esq., LL.D., Capt. STEWART L. MURRAY, Colonel F. H. MOUNTSTEVEN, Colonel R. PILKINGTON, M.P., Colonel E. PRYCE-JONES, M.P., Fleet Engineer GEORGE QUICK, R.N., Major-General J. B. STERLING, Major-General BLAND STRANGE, Major SEELY, D.S.O., M.P., Commander the Hon. HENRY N. SHORE, R.N., Mr. GEORGE F. SHEE, Lieut.-Colonel UNDERWOOD, Colonel Sir HOWARD VINCENT, K.C.M.G., C.B., M.P., Major-General C. E. WEBBER, C.B., The EARL OF WEMYSS, Mr. E. P. WARREN, Major A. E. YATE.

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NOTE.

The National Service League is in no way responsible for the particular scheme put forward in this Lecture.



THE ADVANTAGES OF COMPULSORY SERVICE
FOR HOME DEFENCE, TOGETHER WITH
A CONSIDERATION OF SOME OF THE
OBJECTIONS WHICH MAY BE URGED
AGAINST IT.

By Mr. GEORGE F. SHEE.

Friday, 14th February, 1902.

The Right Hon. Lord NEWTON, Lancashire Hussars
(Imperial Yeomanry), in the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN :—Mr. Shee, who is about to deliver the lecture to you this afternoon, is a gentleman with whose name most of you are probably acquainted in connection with that most admirable work entitled "The Briton's First Duty," which is now being circulated by private subscription. I trust that Mr. Shee will pardon me if I take the opportunity of pointing out that his presence upon this platform this afternoon, and my presence, form a most useful commentary upon the way in which we manage our military affairs. Mr. Shee, if I may say so without disrespect to him, is nothing but an ordinary civilian without any military training. I, personally, who have the honour of presiding over this distinguished assembly, am also a civilian almost absolutely destitute of any military knowledge, although, under the remarkable system which prevails, I enjoy a comparatively exalted rank in one of the branches of the Auxiliary forces, and presumably, in certain cases of emergency, would be entrusted with the lives of a considerable number of men. Now, the excuse for this apparent anomaly is to be found in the obvious fact that any person of ordinary intelligence can form an opinion as to the advisability or non-advisability of compulsion, more especially if he is likely to be liable to it himself. And I hope I may say on behalf of all reasonable persons who are in favour of what is called compulsion, that what we mean by compulsion is not conscription in the Continental sense. Reasonable persons

—amongst whom I hope I may be allowed to include myself—do not advocate the turning of this country into an immense camp, or covering it with barracks. They do not propose to imitate the system which prevails upon the Continent, neither do they contemplate that the youth of this country should pass the best years of his life, say, in the Far East or in Central Africa, as appears to be imagined by Lord Salisbury and other eminent statesmen. What they do propose is, that the able-bodied youth of this country should go through a short course of compulsory Militia training, both in a military and in a naval sense, founded more or less roughly upon the system which prevails, say, in Switzerland. The persons who advocate this view, rightly or wrongly, believe that if this course was ever adopted it would have several most important effects. In the first place, that it will render an invasion of this country—a point upon which no military experts appear to be decided—an impossibility; that, in the second place, it would afford an immense reserve which could be used, if necessary, to supplement the Regular Army, and which would free the Regular Army and the Navy for their proper task, viz., that of attacking the enemy; and, in the third place, they believe that it would have immense beneficial results, both from the physical and moral aspects, upon the inhabitants of these islands. These points no doubt will be dealt with by more competent persons in the course of the proceedings. If these views have made any progress, and if they are now entering into the region of practical politics, instead of being regarded as the views of lunatics, surely it is easily explained by what has taken place within the last two years. The public memory is proverbially short, but I venture to remind you, ignorant civilian though I may be, of facts which are patent to everybody. I should like to remind you of the fact that two years ago Lord Lansdowne, speaking in his place in the House of Lords as the Minister for War, had to admit that there were over 92,000 men in the British Army who were unfit for active service. I should like to remind you that it was found necessary, in order to give the country some vague sense of security, to persuade time-expired men to return to service by offering them extravagant bounties. I should also like to remind you that it was found necessary, and is found necessary still, to offer a sum of no less than 5s. per head per day to men who will go out and fight for us in South Africa; and, lastly, I would remind you that it has been found necessary only recently, if I am not mistaken, to reduce the standard of the Regular Army to the height of 5 feet, that is to say, about the size of a well-grown girl of 15 or 16. Now, in addition to these facts, which cannot be *contradicted*, I must also remind you of warnings which from time to time are addressed to us by persons who are in a better position than anybody else, viz., the present and the past Prime Ministers of this country. They have pointed out what is perfectly clear and obvious to everybody that we have no friends, unless we except our newly-found friend in the Far East: that, on the other hand, we have numerous enemies, and that it is quite possible—I am not quoting my own words, but I am quoting the words of these distinguished statesmen—that some day we may find a coalition formed against us, and that, in short, our position is as critical as it can be. In face of these warnings, I should like to ask whether any thoughtful person does not feel some doubt in his own mind as to whether what I may call the hand-to-mouth expedients by which we have hitherto protected the British Empire are still sufficient for their purpose; and whether, for instance, in the case of a European war, which is foreshadowed by these statesmen, we could rely for our safety upon working up the raw material into fighting forces as we have been able to do in the case of the present war. I have no wish to detain you, but I want to point one thing, and that is this: that the question we ought to put to ourselves, or rather which the Government ought to put to the people of this country—which it never does—is not, Do you want your Army or your military system

to be reformed? because, of course, everyone answers that question in the affirmative: but that what ought to be asked of the people of this country is, Are you prepared to make the necessary sacrifice in order to maintain the national security? Probably, in the opinion of some of the distinguished persons whom I see present before me, complete national security is only to be obtained by imitating the example of civilised and semi-civilised Powers, and of establishing the principle that the State has the clear right to call upon the able-bodied young men of this country to perform some form of compulsory duty. I have only one word to add, and that is this: All those who have had any experience of Parliament will agree with me when I say that there is not the smallest prospect of any principle of this kind being put forward by people in office or by people who expect office. It is not a principle which would be accepted by the nation if it were put forward solely by the Navy or by the Army, because these would be looked upon as interested parties. If it ever is to come to anything, this demand will have to be put forward by independent persons. I would further point out, in conclusion, that it is the duty of all those who believe in this principle, by whatever means they advocate it, to join together, to unite their forces, and to do their best to educate the rest of their countrymen upon this most vitally important question. I will now ask Mr. Shee to read his paper.

LECTURE.

WHEN I say that I am deeply sensible of the honour of being asked to address you to-day, I use the words in no merely conventional sense; for it is, indeed, a high honour for a civilian to be allowed to speak on a quasi-military subject before an assembly which includes much of the brains and the ripe experience of both branches of His Majesty's Service. Still more do I appreciate that honour when I reflect that I am going to deal, not merely with some academic question, such as the best system of mobilisation or the relative importance of speed and armour-thickness in vessels, but with a subject momentous and significant in every way.

For it is one which affects personally every man and woman, nay, every boy and girl, in this country and throughout the Empire; it is one which already looms large on the horizon, with all the import of living actuality, and is fraught with mighty consequences for the Empire and the race. Yet, perhaps, these very considerations in some measure justify the invitation which your Council has given to a civilian in this instance. For it cannot be too clearly understood, or too strongly emphasised, that this question of compulsory service for home defence is, in reality, not a military or naval one at all, but essentially a civilian one. It is for the men and women of England, it is for the ordinary citizen to decide whether the manhood of this country shall at last rise to the manifest duty of personal service to King and country for home defence, or whether we shall continue, as a nation, ignobly to shift our burthens on to other men's shoulders, be they the poorest of the poor who enlist in

the Regular Army, or the couple of hundred thousand out of a possible three or four millions who, very generously—seeing that others do *nothing*—give a considerable amount of their time in the attempt to make themselves efficient soldiers.

There is, too, another reason why it is, perhaps, better that a civilian should urge this duty of home defence. An officer of either Service who should insist on this duty is liable to be met by Sganarelle's remark to the jeweller: *Vous êtes orfèvre, M. Josse!* "Oh, yes," the public is apt to say; "it's all very well for you officers to talk; of course you want to fill up your scanty battalions with healthy *men* instead of weedy boys, and your ships with as many trained sailors, engineers, and artificers as you think the Service requires. You only care about the efficiency of the Service, and can't view these things with the open mind of the liberty-loving Briton, warped as your minds are by a long course of discipline. No, no, gentlemen, you have an axe to grind; you are out of court."

Of course such an attitude is very absurd; but it is undoubtedly the attitude adopted by many people towards any officer who speaks out plainly what he knows to be for the good, nay, for the safety, of his country.

Since, however, it has fallen to my lot to deal with this great subject before a body of naval and military experts, I shall, as far as possible, confine myself to those aspects of the question on which the ordinary civilian, the "man in the street," may be allowed to express an opinion, and on which, in truth, he will ultimately be called upon to pronounce judgment. This course seems the wisest from my point of view, having in mind the limit of time allowed for this lecture; being, too, not unmindful of Horace's warning, *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*. It will, I think, also prove pleasanter to my audience. For a discussion of the *necessity* for compulsory service would lead me into an historical survey of our recruiting system, and would entail a mass of figures and statistics, which, I am sure, you will be grateful to me for omitting. Nor does it, in any case, seem very necessary to insist on this point seeing that we have been for months past at our wits' end for trained men. So that one can imagine Mr. Brodrick echoing the famous protest which Schiller attributes to Charles VII. of France when his councillors called upon him, as the country does on the Secretary for War, for "more men": *Kann ich Armeen aus der Erde stampfen?*—"Will armies spring up if I stamp my foot?" I shall, then, take it for granted that the *necessity* for compulsory service for home defence has been established; and, asking leave to refer the enquirer to the full treatment of the subject in my book "The Briton's First Duty," I will pass on to a consideration of the advantages accruing from that system.

In doing so I must, however, make it clear to you what I mean by compulsory service, and, still more, what I do not mean. And, perhaps, the simplest way of expressing what I mean is to give you a very short sketch of what I should consider a comprehensive and efficient scheme for Imperial Defence.

I consider that three things are required to assure the safety of the British Empire. These are :—

1. A strong Navy, *at least* equal in strength to the combined forces of any two Powers—equal not merely in numbers, but having regard to the thousand duties which the vast extent of our Empire and our sea-borne commerce and food supply lay upon our fleets.

2. A highly-trained, long-service Army for garrison and “police” duties in India and in those parts of the Empire where a large native population requires the presence of a permanent garrison as a measure of precaution, and for such ports and coaling stations as cannot well be garrisoned by men drawn from the resident population.

It is hardly necessary to say that this professional Army must be recruited on voluntary lines. Nobody, so far as I know, has ever suggested that our permanent forces abroad—those which we are obliged to maintain for garrison and police purposes—that these should be conscript forces. The idea is inconceivable, for if foreign possessions could only be held by submitting to such an intolerable burthen, the nation would doubtless prefer to relinquish them. As Sir George Sydenham Clarke, that great authority on Imperial Defence, has said: “Our normal foreign garrisons . . . must be . . . voluntarily recruited. This is not a condition peculiar to Great Britain” (as, by the way, many people appear to think), “since no Power employs conscript troops in distant and tropical stations.” I have elsewhere pointed out the means by which we could secure an adequate supply of suitable men for the Imperial Army, and I will not detain you with a discussion of these matters of detail here. Suffice it to say that by recognising the duty of every citizen to give his services freely for *home defence* with a merely nominal remuneration, *as the men of every other European nation do*, we can afford to make the conditions of voluntary service abroad favourable enough to obtain all the men we want, of the best quality possible—since we should have the whole Empire as our recruiting ground—and on terms which would really repay them for engaging in what we may call one of the “dangerous trades.”

3. The third requirement for the safety of the Empire—and it is one on which the other two must ultimately be based if they are to be truly efficient—is an immense Reserve of trained men, what I should call a Pan-Britannic Militia, consisting of all able-bodied white men throughout the Empire.

These three things are required to make the Empire secure, and it seems to me obvious that the first two can have no complete stability unless they are intimately connected with the third.

In fact, I should express the relationship of the Navy, the professional Imperial Army and the National Militia in a comprehensive scheme of Imperial defence in a metaphor: The Navy represents the arms of England, swift and strong and with a world-wide reach; at the ends of these arms there must be heavy, sledge-hammer fists, ready to strike at any moment—the professional long-service Army; but both arms and fists must be fed by a strong, healthy body—the manhood of the nation and the Empire; otherwise they may eventually become weak and atrophied, when a serious strain is put upon them.

Remember that this Militia which I propose would be essentially a home defence force in whatever part of the Empire it happened to be raised. The Canadian Militia for Canadian defence, the Australian Militia for Australia, and so on. This Militia would *never* be called upon for garrison duty away from home, but it would form a trained Reserve of men who, in case of *war*, would be called upon according to the cadre of Reserve in which they were at the time, to fill up the casualties in the ranks of the foreign-service Army, and to reinforce the latter *en masse* in a national war.

How would such a Militia be composed (supposing that the Colonies of their own choice follow the lead of the mother country in the matter)?

1. Every able-bodied white man throughout the Empire would undergo one year's military service in the Active Militia at any time he liked between the ages of 18 and 23, the maritime population serving their year in the naval branch of the Active Militia.

2. He would then pass into the Militia Reserve, which would consist of three parts, corresponding to the German Reserve, Landwehr, and Landsturm, respectively. The First Reserve would include men between 18 and 25; the Second, men between 25 and 30; and the Third (which would never be called upon for foreign service of any kind), would include men up to 40. Men in the First Reserve would undergo two trainings of four weeks each in the course of their period; men in the Second Reserve two trainings of a fortnight each. The Third Reserve might be called out for two trainings of a week each; but as this Reserve would only be called upon to serve in case of invasion, it would probably not be necessary to insist on this.

3. Every man who passed an examination, which gave proof of a sound general education (the standard should not be lower than that of London matriculation) would be relieved of six months of his service in the Active Militia, but not of any of the subsequent training in the Reserves.

4. Exemptions would be granted to the physically unfit, who would (as in Switzerland) pay a tax in some measure proportionate to their means instead; and to all those classes who obtain exemption in the French and German Armies, sole supporters of a poor family, etc.

Such is, in outline, the scheme of universal military service which I would propose. It amounts practically to this—that every able-bodied white subject of the King would give one year of his early manhood to his country. He would thus acquire the military training necessary to fit him to defend the glorious Empire to which it is his privilege to belong. It does not seem an extravagant price to pay for such advantages as British citizenship confers. In any case, I have shown elsewhere, that some such sacrifice is *necessary*. Let us now consider the advantages which universal military service would bestow.

I. It would give us security from invasion; and, what is almost as important, from *attempted invasion*.

For, first: it would give us a peace-footing of about 250,000 trained men, with a war-footing of over 2,000,000. The peace-footing of 250,000 would be exclusive of the men in the professional Army and the Navy.

Second: about 40,000 of the numbers I have given as the peace-footing would be men of the maritime population who had been through their year of service in the Active Naval Militia. These men would gradually form that ample trained Naval Reserve of which we are so greatly in need, and which under present conditions and with over 40,000 foreigners in British ships, is becoming every day more difficult to obtain. Witness the bait recently offered to men to join the Reserve by the great reduction in the period of sea-training, obviously at the cost of efficiency. At present we have barely 25,000 men in the Naval Reserve, hardly enough to bring up our peace complements to war-strength, let alone fill up the casualties in a naval war. On the other hand, all the other naval Powers have an unlimited naval reserve in their *inscription maritime*. Universal military service would in a few years give us a trained Naval Reserve of over 100,000 men.

Third: compulsory service would indirectly secure us from invasion, by giving a perfectly free hand to the Navy. Under present conditions, the Government would be afraid of sending the Channel Fleet far from home waters, lest our evident defencelessness should produce panic. But if England were to become “a nation in arms” (a *trained* nation, be it understood), on the declaration of war, the Navy would be free to carry out its true and traditional work—to find and crush the enemy’s fleets in his own waters or wherever they might be found.

II. The simple fact that the British Empire would be strong to resist attack, would be the surest guarantee of peace in nearly every part of the globe. At the present moment, the very wealth and extent of our

Empire and commerce, *ill-defended as they are*, are a perpetual incentive to attack on the part of those nations which are aiming at a larger share of the world's trade and to whom the downfall of Great Britain would mean a large increase in wealth and prosperity.

Now, we recognise a great difference in criminality between a house-breaker who forces a lock or smashes a window, and a thief who takes the opportunity offered by an open door to snatch some of the treasures which may be exposed to view; and we blame the careless householder in the latter case almost as much as the thief. Well, I believe it may be said, without appearing paradoxical, that the defencelessness of our Empire is a standing menace to the peace of the world. For, as long as the world lasts, the true maxim will be *Si vis pacem, para bellum*. Two instances aptly illustrate this fact. No student of history will deny that the peace of Europe for the last thirty years has been mainly due to Germany's perfect and *known* preparedness for war, which has prevented France from plunging into another war in the hope of recovering at once her provinces and her prestige.

On the other hand, does anyone imagine for a moment, that the South African Republics would have thrown down the gauntlet to the British Empire if, like themselves, we had had compulsory service? But with an overweening contempt for the forces we could put into the field at once, they were convinced that by striking quickly and strongly they could drive us into the sea, and "with God's help, take all that is English in South Africa," as one of them boastfully declared. Think, too, of the immense saving in lives and treasure, if, in spite of our obvious strength, they had elected to go to war. We could have sent 100,000 trained men in the early part of the war with greater ease and at far less expense than we sent 10,000. Thus, should we have been saved those months of gloom, in December and January, 1899 and 1900, and the war would probably have been over in six months. Above all we should have felt secure that, come what might in South Africa, any nation which should feel inclined to take advantage of our troubles would have had to face, besides the British Navy, "a nation in arms." No one can pretend that the country felt any such security during several anxious months of 1900 and 1901.

III. If every Briton in our great Empire were to go through the same military training under the flag that is typical of union, taking the same oath to the Sovereign, an indissoluble tie would be formed, uniting the whole of our race in the strongest of bonds, that of a brotherhood in arms. Thus the great question of Imperial Federation would find its simplest and most natural solution. For history has shown again and again that nothing is more powerful in strengthening the spirit of national unity, and in obliterating petty local jealousies, than common

service under one flag. It was the Army which transformed Italy from a group of jealous and quarrelsome States into a united nation. It was the Army that wiped out the distrust and mutual jealousies of the various German principalities and created united Germany. It is the Army that holds together the Austro-Hungarian Empire to-day. And the one great good which has come out of the evil of this war is that it has done more to unite all the Colonies to the mother country in one British Commonwealth, than a hundred Acts of Federation, even though passed by a representative Imperial Parliament. Nay, I look forward to the time when the splendid men who have fought so bravely against us in South Africa, will be trained side by side with their late opponents in the ranks of the South African Militia. I believe that the modern Chatham—would that one might arise!—who would initiate that measure would do more to heal the scar of recent war, more to bring about mutual goodwill and respect between men who for good or ill have to live side by side, than any measure of conciliation that could be devised.

IV. The next advantage I would put before you is this, that universal military service would give us a true patriotism, a patriotism distinguished from the spurious patriotism of the music-halls on the one hand, and the indifferentism and Little Englandism which is all too common on the other. Let every young Briton go through a year's training in the National Militia, and he will learn what a noble birthright he is heir to as a citizen of the greatest Empire the world has ever seen. He will learn to respect himself and others. He will scorn to use the Union Jack as a gay rag only to be frantically waved in people's faces on such occasions as Mafeking Day, and he will, while feeling the honourable necessity of defending his country against attack, look upon war as a grave and terrible eventuality, not to be entered upon lightly or in the spirit of sport, but with the serious earnestness which becomes the manly citizen of a great nation. There is, indeed, in my opinion, nothing more calculated to kill Jingoism and a boastful spirit of aggressiveness than the consciousness of strength coupled with the feeling of personal responsibility.

V. Universal military service is fair and just, and on that ground alone it should appeal to Englishmen. We are, as a nation, perhaps more governed by *words*, instead of thoughts and facts, than any other. Hence the magic influence of the word "voluntary," with which we have bawled down the arguments of those who would have us examine the truth of our position, and see whether it is as dignified and honourable as we keep on telling one another it is. Even now we occasionally hear on the platform a denunciation of compulsory service as being "incompatible with the highly-developed conscience of the English people,"

which high-sounding phrase is apt to be followed by a pitying reference to the poor Continental people who languish under the tyranny of personal service to their country. Such canting language, I say, is still sometimes to be heard ; but I note that the applause with which it is greeted begins to have a very thin and perfunctory sound. And no wonder ! For what is such a statement but an insult to the patriotism of the British people, masquerading as a compliment ? The "voluntary system" is, as I have said above, necessary for our foreign-service professional Army. But what, after all, does the phrase mean ? It means that those who can afford to do so, pay others to do their fighting for them, that fighting being recognised as a necessary condition of national security. Well, this is a very convenient arrangement, and, as regards our foreign garrisons, a necessary one. But I fail to see anything in it to make a subject of boasting. We might as well boast that we have a voluntary police force. When, however, it comes to shirking the obvious duty of home defence, a duty imposed by the fundamental laws of society, and to neglect which is to jeopardise the safety of the community itself, I think that the less said about the gloriousness of the "voluntary system" and the less pity bestowed upon those nations which take a different view of a citizen's duties, the better for us.

Time will not allow me to deal with some other aspects of the "voluntary system" which are even less calculated to make us proud of it. I refer to the motives which induce many thousands to enlist, amongst which, as every recruiting officer knows only too well, the chief are poverty, hunger, and utter failure in civil life. It is often only when the choice lies between the workhouse and the Army that the "voluntary" recruit chooses the latter, and even then his decision is by no means to be taken for granted ; witness the numbers of able-bodied paupers in our workhouses—125,000 in January, 1899, of whom we may take it that 25,000 were strong young men, well fitted to earn an honourable livelihood in His Majesty's service. I will not here refer to the many abuses which have flourished under the cover of the "voluntary" system, such as the impressment of paupers, debtors, and criminals, and the odious operations of the press-gang. Suffice it to say that the question has only to be considered with an open mind for a moment for it to be obvious that it is the first and most sacred duty of every citizen to defend his country, and that to shift that duty on to other shoulders may be convenient, but can never really be otherwise than unfair and unworthy of the citizens of a great Empire.

VI. Service side by side in the ranks of the National Militia would bring together all classes of the community to their great mutual advantage. Plough-boy, factory-hand, and duke's son would stand shoulder to shoulder, as they learned their common task under the

authority of a non-commissioned officer taken from the people. And each would learn something from the other; the gentleman proving himself such by his exemplary attendance to duty and by acting up to the grand old motto *noblesse oblige*, while the man from the humbler ranks of life would honour and respect him not simply because he was richer than himself, but because he shared with him in a common duty and a common patriotism. The sons of the well-to-do would learn a valuable lesson, too, in appreciating the conditions under which millions of their fellowmen "live and move and have their being." Such knowledge would, in generous hearts—and, fortunately, most of the young are generous—lead to a resolve to do what was in their power to alleviate some of the misery apparently inseparable from modern civilisation, while it would surely prevent some of the indulgence in idleness and extravagant luxury which too often make the rich man an object of hatred and contempt to the poorer classes. Certain it is that in no European country is there so much misery among the very poor, such a chasm between the classes and the masses as in England; and it is a curious thing that in proportion as compulsory service is more completely universal in its incidence, there seems to be the least pauperism, England standing at the head of the list, while Switzerland has no paupers.

VII. I need not spend much time in showing that universal military service would immensely improve the physique of the nation.

No observant traveller can have failed to be struck nowadays with the difference between the average type of man one meets in the streets abroad and in England. On the Continent, we find, as a rule, sturdy, straight-backed men and women, holding themselves well and walking with the ease and freedom which comes of bones and muscles early trained to do their work well. In English streets, on the other hand, if we look well, we shall see that the majority of those who pass us slouch along, holding themselves badly and with a general want of tone in their whole demeanour. And yet we are supposed to be the nation that is so passionately devoted to manly games and sports. Whence, then, this extraordinary result? The answer is very simple, though it has long been shirked. The fact is, that while a small percentage of boys, chiefly among the sons of the well-to-do classes, devote an altogether absurd and disproportionate amount of time and energy to mere play, thereby wasting much of the precious time in which they should be fitting themselves for the battle of life, the vast majority of our male population, the *million*, never get any physical training at all. A small proportion of them, it is true, hire themselves out for money and spend the best part of their manhood (surely intended for a nobler purpose) in kicking a football about or hunting a cricket ball round the globe. And the others? They crowd in their thousands to see other

men "play the game," while the only "sport" they indulge in themselves is to bet on the result or on a horse they have never seen. This was exactly what the Romans did in their degenerate days, when they had ceased to fight themselves, and did their fighting, whether in the field or in the arena, by proxy, their whole object in life being summed up in the cry *Panem et circenses*.

There can be no doubt whatever that a proper system of military training, which should as far as possible be carried out, under canvas at the important age when the boy is turning into a man, accompanied and preceded, as it is in Switzerland, Germany, and Austria, by compulsory scientific gymnastic training for both sexes, would soon improve our town-bred and rapidly deteriorating population. This is not simply a question of opinion founded on the laws of probability. It is the experience of statisticians founded on anthropometrical measurements that the physique of the French and German peoples has immensely improved under the system of universal military service. Indeed, in the case of France, men who knew that country before 1870 have assured me that they have noticed the remarkable improvement throughout the people, while it is said that the Germans have added two inches to the average stature in the ninety years which have elapsed since Scharnhorst and Stein rendered the inestimable service to their country of giving them at once compulsory training for mind and body.

I need hardly say that I would most strongly advocate compulsory physical drill and gymnastics (not *only* the latter) for boys and girls in *all* schools, public and private, primary and secondary. For it is the obvious duty of the State to see that its citizens grow up with sound bodies as well as with sane minds.

VIII. If the physical advantages of compulsory military training are more obvious, its moral advantages to a nation are none the less real and almost as important. For what does military training imply? It means discipline, obedience to authority, manliness, and, above all, devotion to duty, without which no self-respecting man can hope to fight the battle of life. The citizen soldier learns during his period of service the lesson of prompt obedience, the importance of thoroughness in the performance of the smallest details, the nobility of work done, as Ruskin says, "in an orderly, soldierly, well-guided, wholesome way." He gets imbued, too, with that feeling of personal responsibility, and with that spirit of self-sacrifice for great causes, for the good of the community, without which social life is little more than a name; he realises, finally, that he, mere unit though he be, has a real share in his country's fate, and this gives him a feeling of solidarity and comradeship with those who are performing the same task with him. In a word, he leaves the ranks not only a better man, morally and physically, but also a better citizen. Amongst a nation of men trained

as they should be to national defence, it would be impossible for the result of a cricket match or a horse-race to arouse more interest than the result of a battle with their country's foes.

IX. Nor can it be denied that there is urgent need of some tonic which shall call the nation, and especially its youths, to a sense of duty. The miserable stuff in the shape of literature (saving the mark!) which is greedily swallowed by boys and girls as soon as they can read, the increase of the means of communication and of all kinds of unhealthy excitements, together with the false sentimentality which resents the proper infliction of just punishment, all these things have tended to emancipate boys and girls from parental control long before they have acquired the slightest sense of duty or responsibility. Hence the frequent manifestations of Hooliganism in all its forms, ranging from a want of respect and deference to the old and to the gentler sex among the youth of the better classes, to the brutal assaults on defenceless passengers by the young roughs of our slums. By giving these young men a good physical and moral training, and letting them feel that they, too, could be of use to their country, we should turn them into men, and, incidentally, save hundreds of thousands of pounds annually, which are now spent in supporting the prisons, workhouses, and lunatic asylums to which these unfortunate creatures sooner or later gravitate.

X. *Education*.—Compulsory military service, at any rate on the lines I propose, would have a powerful effect in raising the educational standard throughout the country. It would do this in three ways:—

1. By the adoption of a system which would grant a reduction of the year of active service only to those who passed an examination which should be a test of sound general education, we should at one stroke raise the standard of secondary education; for it would be impossible for boys to leave public schools, as hundreds of them do now, knowing next to nothing of anything, ignorant of the history and literature of their country, totally unable to speak or write a modern language, with next to no knowledge of mathematics, and, most disgraceful of all, quite incapable of expressing themselves in a connected and reasonable way in a decent English essay. We are accustomed to put down the superior education of the Germans entirely to their better methods of teaching. This is a mistake, though of course it accounts for a great deal. But the high general level of education in that country is due to the fact that *every* well-to-do youth aims at passing his *Einjähriges Examen*, or at passing out of the *Unter-Sekunda* at the *Gymnasium*. For to fail to do so is not only regarded as almost disgraceful, but

entails the necessity of undergoing two years' service instead of one—a much greater sacrifice in the case of such a youth than for a peasant or an artisan.

2. If we adopted a similar plan to that which prevails in Switzerland, no man would be allowed to do his term of service till he could read and write properly. There a youth is sent back to school until he has conquered the elements of education, and as we can imagine, no youth of twenty cares to be sent back to his A B C with children of ten. This plan; therefore, acts as an excellent antidote to ill teracy, which is almost unknown in that country.
3. A sound military training is in itself an education in method, regularity of life, and general application of means to ends. All competent observers are agreed that one of the chief factors in the extraordinary commercial and industrial success of Germany is the magnificent training in methodic work given to every man that passes through the ranks of the National Army. And German manufacturers have repeatedly assured me that an employé who has done his service is worth twice as much as the one who has not yet served or been exempt for some reason. It must be remembered, too, that the German soldier's education is continued and most carefully watched over during his sojourn in the ranks. He is especially encouraged by his officers and instructors to study the history and literature of his country, together with the simple facts of natural history and science. His service is, in fact, made as far as possible a school of life, and the requirements of a modern Army are so multifarious and have such manifold ramifications that most men are put to that work which they have chosen as their means of livelihood. Thus, tailors, shoemakers, mechanics, railway-workers, engineers, fitters, butchers, and bakers, fall naturally into their proper places as soon as they have learnt the elements of their military work, and many of them spend the whole of their two years' service in practising their own trade under an orderly system of organisation.

These considerations will show that the adoption of compulsory service would give a valuable stimulus, both direct and indirect, to the education of the people, who need it more and more, as the competition with the trained workers of other nations grows keener year by year.

XI. I now come to a consideration which will, I think, commend itself to the British taxpayer, as an advantage of compulsory service which is of a thoroughly practical nature.

I refer to the fact, which I am about to prove, that under some such scheme as I propose, our Army Estimates would be very considerably decreased—by at least £10,000,000 sterling a year—while we should certainly get better value for our money.

I have said that under my proposals each part of the Empire would provide its own Home Defence Army or National Militia. Hitherto, not only the British Navy, but the British Army has been at the call of any part of the Empire, while almost the whole of the cost has fallen upon the taxpayer of the United Kingdom. This is hardly fair, as has begun to be recognised by the Colonies, especially by that splendid Colony Canada. Both Canadians and Australians are taking steps to provide sufficient home defence forces, and Cape Colony has shown its intention to contribute to Imperial Defence by the splendid gift of the battle-ship “Good Hope,” which arrived on these shores a few weeks back.¹

We may take it then, that in one form or another, the Colonies will manfully and generously contribute their share to Imperial Defence, both in men and money.

That being the case, our permanent foreign garrisons will be those in India, about 74,000 men, and those needed for our coaling stations and for the occupation of Egypt, together with the *nucleus* of an Imperial Army in South Africa for some years to come. The 74,000 men on the Indian establishment are paid for out of India's funds, and do not therefore concern us here. Before the war the numbers of the foreign-service Army outside India amounted to about 30,000 men, including about 10,000 in South Africa. If we add another 20,000, I think we shall reach a fairly safe estimate, giving 50,000 as the number of “Imperial” troops required for garrison and police duties outside India, and to allow for a *nucleus* of highly-trained, long-service soldiers in the United Kingdom. I have shown elsewhere, by a very careful examination of the facts, that the cost per man of the chief Armies of the world is as follows (taking 1898 as a normal year):—

					£	s.	d.
Austria-Hungary	-	-	-	-	about	33	0 0
Russia-	-	-	-	-	„	34	0 0
Italy	-	-	-	-	„	44	0 0
France	-	-	-	-	„	46	0 0
Germany	-	-	-	-	„	50	0 0
Great Britain	-	-	-	-	„	123	0 0
United States	-	-	-	-	„	450	0 0

¹ This is an error on the part of Mr. Shee. The Cape Government some four years ago did offer to build a battle-ship: it was, however, finally arranged that the Cape should pay a yearly sum of £30,000, which is roughly the interest on the capital sum a first-class battle-ship costs. The name “Good Hope” was given to one of the new large cruisers, as a compliment to Cape Colony for their offer.—ED.

I may say that the latter figure does not take into account the enormous sum of £29,000,000 per annum for pensions.

Now, I believe that the economy which would follow the application of the business sense of the country to Army affairs would reduce our expenditure per man on the professional soldier to £110 at the most. Allowing, too, a margin of £10 a year per head for the higher cost of living here as compared with Germany and France, I think that we ought easily to get our National Militia at £60 per man per annum.

We have, therefore, to consider the cost of 50,000 men at £110 per man, and 250,000 men at £60 per man. This would give us £20,500,000 as the total of our Army Estimates.

But, as I have said before, about 40,000 of the 250,000 would belong to the Naval Militia, and would therefore be paid for out of the Navy Estimates. Deducting £2,400,000 for these 40,000 men, we arrive at the sum of £18,100,000 as the total of our Army Estimates for the 50,000 men of the professional Army outside India, and for 210,000 short service men on a peace footing in the National Militia.

Thus we should save about £12,000,000 sterling on our present ordinary Army Estimates of £30,000,000. I would particularly draw the attention of naval men to this point, and indeed urge its importance on all those who may have some doubt as to whether universal military service will not distract attention from the Navy, and perhaps, "starve" the latter, in favour of the Army.

So far from this being the case, I have already pointed out that the Navy will be directly benefited by being provided with an adequate and efficient Reserve. And I have now shown that about £12,000,000 a year would be saved from the Army Estimates, while a small sum would be added to the Naval Estimates for the Reserve, which has, however, to be paid for at present without good value being obtained for the expenditure.

The money thus saved from Army expenditure would leave a handsome margin for the building of the additional battle-ships and cruisers which are necessary to bring the Navy up to the proper standard of strength. For it cannot be too clearly understood that Army expenditure under the voluntary system has increased continuously, is increasing, and is bound to go on increasing, seeing that it depends mainly upon *personnel*, and therefore, upon the current rate of wages.

Under compulsory service, on the other hand, this element remains stationary, and we should provide a larger and much more efficient Army at a much smaller cost, thus leaving a margin for additional Navy expenditure, which, depending as it does essentially on *matériel*, is bound to go on increasing as the inevitable consequence of the increase of foreign Navies.

I should, however, myself prefer the number of the professional Army outside India to be 100,000. This would enable us to have two or three army corps completely ready for any emergency, and give us an ample margin for expeditionary purposes and small wars, without calling for volunteers from the younger cadres of the National Militia. If we allow for 100,000 men at £110 per head, the Army Estimates would be £23,600,000, and we should still save over £6,000,000 a year.

We should have, therefore besides 100,000 men in the long-service Army outside India, a National Militia with a peace-footing of 210,000 together with a Naval Reserve of about 40,000; and a war-footing of over 2,000,000 men, and still save £6,000,000 a year on our present Estimates, which give us neither numbers nor efficiency.

When we take into account the saving on prisons, workhouses, and lunatic asylums, and on the National Debt, which would result from a system of compulsory service, it will be seen that the saving to the country in actual hard cash would be very great, to say nothing of the addition to national efficiency and wage-earning power.

XII. Universal service for home defence would be a great benefit to labour: First, by the educative training given to the young labourer during the year of service. It has been well said by that eminent Liberal politician the late Sir Charles Trevelyan, that "to a young labourer, military training is as great, even a greater, advantage than University training to a young man intended for a professional career." For he would get a year's free training at the cost of the State, which would mean to him an immense improvement in physique and health owing to an active life in the open air, with good food and airy rooms to live and sleep in, together with a valuable lesson in methodic work, which would add greatly to his wage-earning capacity.

Secondly, it would relieve the labour market, and thus go far to solve the problem of the unemployed.

I have pointed out before that Great Britain stands at the head of the list for the number of paupers; she has, indeed more than 1,000,000, that is, more than France, Germany, and Russia put together. Now, these nations each keep some 400,000 young unmarried men off the labour market each year, thus allowing the older married men to remain employed, who would be thrown out of work and become paupers if the young men were competing with them. As Captain Murray has pointed out in his excellent little pamphlet, the great central fact of modern industry is that there are always more men to work than there is work for them to do. Hence the number of the unemployed. They have somehow to be maintained by the State. In every other European country they are maintained by being given honourable employment in bearing arms in the service of their country. In England, we keep them in

workhouses, degrading them as recipients of public charity and making them, in a very real sense, a burden to themselves and their country.

Now, if compulsory service would relieve the labour market and the workhouses in time of peace, how much more would it do so in time of war! Captain Murray shows that there would be at least 1,200,000 men who would be unemployed if we were at war with a Power which was at all able to influence the arrival of our food-supply and raw material. Well, these would be immediately and automatically absorbed into the National Army, and the State would only have to support their wives and families and a certain considerable number of older men and those physically unfitted for military service.

Thus in peace or in war, universal military service is a benefit to labour.

XIII. The last advantage which I shall have time to notice is this, that universal military service would do much to stem the tide of pauper, and largely criminal, alien immigration which flows to these shores in a perennial and muddy stream. Alone among civilised people, we allow ourselves to be swamped by the dregs of the German, Polish, Russian, and Hungarian nations. The United States, with a common sense view to the interests of their citizens, have long since put a stop to this kind of thing. But good, honest John Bull, with his kindly policy of live and let live, has allowed, and still continues to allow, the bread to be taken from the mouths of his own poor, to feed those who have in many cases left their country for their country's good. Good, kind John Bull! And what are the thanks he gets? The revilings of all the nations, which have gone into hysterics of joy over his misfortunes, jeered at his successes, poured out the foulest and filthiest lies on our nation and our Army, not hesitating to hurl their mud at the noble figure of her late Majesty the Queen, or at our present Monarch, and which have prayed for our downfall that they might divide the spoils, as if we were in truth the nation of criminals which their diseased imaginations have pictured. I think it is high time to remember that the first duty of a nation is to itself, as Count von Bülow is continually telling his countrymen. Let us have done with a false sentimentality for which we are only laughed at. There is no doubt that the immunity from personal service afforded by England has hitherto been one of the chief sources of attraction to the undesirable guests of whom I have spoken; and we may hope that, in default of direct prohibition, the removal of that immunity will do much to prevent this country from being any longer the dumping ground of the off-scourings of Europe.

I have now tried to put before you very briefly some of the chief advantages which would accrue from the adoption of universal compulsory service for home defence. I have shown fully elsewhere that the

sacrifice—for I do not for a moment deny that it is a sacrifice—is *necessary* for the actual safety of the country. But I think, and I say it with all the earnestness of a profound conviction, that the advantages incidentally conferred upon the nation by that sacrifice are so great, that if the necessity did not exist, it would be the highest wisdom and the wisest statesmanship to invent it.

I am afraid there is only time for me to deal with a few of the objections that have been urged against compulsory service. But as I have met them all very fully in my book, I do not think I shall be accused of trying to avoid them. On the contrary, so fully convinced am I of the justice, necessity, and advantages of compulsory service, that I would willingly meet all possible objections that could be urged or invented. And I may say that, amid all the reviews which have appeared on my book, none—not even the most hostile—have brought forward any objections that I have not met; nor indeed have they attempted any serious argument, contenting themselves with vague denunciations of the iniquity and absurdity of the mere mention of “conscription.” I shall have to confine myself here to answering two or three of the objections which are most frequently heard and to which we may, therefore, suppose that the most weight is attached.

I. “It is an interference with the liberty of the subject.”

Well, I do not for a moment deny that it is. But those who use this *ad captandum* argument—and it is one most frequently heard—forget that there is one thing more precious than the liberty of the subject, and that is the liberty and safety of the State. For once this is infringed, the whole edifice of society topples to destruction, and that same precious liberty of the subject is the first to be engulfed in the general ruin.

This is so obvious, that a moment's reflection is sufficient to convince the most loud-mouthed opponent of its truth. And if he need further proof to convince him of the necessary subordination of the interests of the individual to those of the community we may remind him of the many ways in which compulsion is continually applied to the individual for the benefit of the State. We are not asked whether we are willing to pay taxes, not only to defend the country, but to feed, educate, and support the poor and the criminals. We are not allowed to let our houses remain in an unsanitary state or be a danger to the passer-by through their state of dilapidation, on the plea that they are our own. Nor can we, if we choose, refuse to inform the authorities of the presence of infectious diseases in our houses. If we are employers, we are responsible for the acts of our servants and employés; responsible, too, for accidents to them which can in any way be traced to our negligence. We are not allowed to employ workmen more than a certain number of hours, however much they or we should like it. Nay, the law even insists

that if called upon by the police to assist them in the execution of their duty we are bound to obey. Here is a pretty state of things in a free country—isn't it? But everybody submits more or less willingly, knowing that these laws are devised for the good of all. Yet the refusal to obey these laws would not at any rate place in jeopardy the safety of the nation. But when *this*, the very condition of social existence, is in question, we are told that the "liberty of the subject" is too sacred a thing to be interfered with—perish the commonwealth, but long live the individual.

This was not the spirit of the ancient laws of England, which required that every freeman—note that the obligation is laid on the freeman as such, *not* on the bondman or serf—should bear arms and obey the call of the Sovereign "against the coming of strange enemies into the realm." Nor was it the spirit of the free Republics of Greece and Rome, which demanded that every freeman—note again that slaves were exempt and not *allowed* to serve—should serve in the national forces whether on sea or land. Nor is it the spirit in which the free Republic of Switzerland views the relations of the citizen to the State. But enough of this matter—suffice it to say that the justice of compulsory service for home defence is founded on our most ancient laws, is laid down in the Militia Ballot Act, still on the Statute Book, and has been affirmed not only by such advocates of liberty as Locke and J. S. Mill, but by the great German Socialist Bebel. In his pamphlet "*Nicht stehendes Heer sondern Volkswehr*" ("Not a Standing Army but National Defence"), he says, italicising the words himself: "Home defence is a duty for all who are capable of fulfilling that duty." In this he shows the keen logic of his mind, as do the educated Socialists and Labour representatives in Switzerland, whereas the academic members of the Peace Society in England inveigh against my proposals as contrary to liberty and justice.

II. "It would interfere with trade and commerce."

There is undoubtedly some truth to this objection, but it is rather like objecting to the payment of taxes on the score that they diminish our incomes.

I will only briefly point out: First, that war with a Continental Power would in any case interfere with our trade and commerce, and it is precisely to avoid war that we wish to be well able to defend ourselves, even at the cost of some present sacrifices. But if war itself would interfere with our trade and commerce, any serious attempt at invasion, even if unsuccessful, would absolutely ruin them. The evidence given on this point by a great banker, Lord Overstone, before the Commission appointed to consider the question of national defence in 1860, is absolutely clear and conclusive. I can only quote here a few words from his statement:—"The calamities attendant upon foreign invasion must,"

he said, "be serious to any country ; but upon a country circumstanced as Great Britain is, they would fall with peculiar and overwhelming severity. . . . The complicated and very delicate network of credit which overlies all the multitudinous transactions of the country would vibrate throughout upon the first touch of our soil by a foreign invader, and would, in all probability, be subject to a sudden and fearful collapse, whilst the confusion and distress produced among the labouring classes would be truly fearful. . . . We may be assured that, under the most favourable supposition, the general confusion and ruin which the presence of a hostile army on British soil must produce will be such that it will be *absolute madness* on the part of the Government and the people of the country were they to omit any possible measure of precaution, or to shrink from present sacrifice, by which the occurrence of such a catastrophe may be rendered impossible."

In a word, compulsory military service must be looked upon simply as an insurance premium paid for national security. I have not got the figures for the amount annually spent on insurance in this country, but it certainly amounts to something like £100,000,000 sterling. Yet no merchant, manufacturer, or householder complains that the money so spent interferes with his business; on the contrary, he would consider it the height of folly to grudge the money so paid, in order to have the present use of it, at the risk of losing his all by an unforeseen accident. Lord Salisbury would seem to have had Lord Overstone's words and these considerations in mind when urging "the necessity of precaution taken in time" at the Primrose League Meeting in May, 1900:—"It may be," he said, "that your precautions will turn out to be entirely unnecessary. It will be a matter for hearty congratulation if it be so, but the loss you may thereby sustain is so inconceivably small compared with the loss you will sustain if your precautions are inadequate, that you will not for a moment measure one against the other."

Secondly, all foreign merchants and employers with whom I have discussed the matter have assured me that while they readily accept the slight inconvenience incurred by having to provide a substitute at a certain known time, in return for the national security obtained, they consider that they are amply repaid by the improved intelligence, habits of discipline and power of methodic work which their employes bring back with them from their training.

And perhaps the best proof that there is no danger of any great interference with trade and commerce is that the list of names of those gentlemen who have done me the honour of assisting in the production of the cheap edition of my book includes not only those of large merchants and employers of labour, but also the eminent name of Sir Robert Giffen, our foremost authority on political economy.

III. "Compulsory service would be more costly than our present system, because it would take away the working classes from productive labour, and so diminish the capital of the country."

I have already indirectly answered this objection in the course of my remarks. But I will briefly summarise the answer thus :—

1. The term "productive" here is fallaciously employed. For the labour necessary to secure the results of productive labour and the fruits of industry cannot be regarded by any sane man as wasteful and unproductive. You might as well apply the term to the labour spent on a dam which protects a rich country from inundation, or on a sea-wall which saves the land from falling into the sea.
2. I have pointed out that, even in the narrower sense, the labour spent by a man in fitting himself to defend his country is not unproductive, since it gives him advantages, physical, mental, moral, and intellectual, which may be regarded as so much fixed capital gained at the cost of the State.
3. I have shown that compulsory service for home defence has a directly favourable effect on the labour market, and goes far to solve the problem of the unemployed, and to put a stop to pauper alien immigration.

IV. The last objection with which I shall have time to deal may be summed up in the word "militarism."

There are many who, even though willing and anxious to make every sacrifice to secure the safety of the country, fear lest the introduction of compulsory military service should in some way undermine the precious heritage of civil and religious liberty which we prize so highly; while, on the other hand, it might lead to an arrogant spirit of aggression towards other countries.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am too profoundly attached to the principles of true liberty myself not to treat this objection with the greatest respect, and I should hesitate to recommend the adoption of universal military service, in spite of all the advantages which I have shown to accrue from it, were I not completely convinced that the fears I have alluded to are quite unfounded, as will appear from the following considerations :—

First, with regard to the fear lest an aggressive spirit should be developed by the measures I have urged, I have already pointed out that there is no better prophylactic against an irresponsible jingoism than personal military service. It is easy to shout for war and show a fine truculent disregard for the rights and susceptibilities of other nations, when war means merely that certain poor fellows we have never seen will

go out in their thousands to fight their country's battles to the cheers of the crowd that stays behind and bawls "The soldiers of the King." It is quite another matter when war means that the whole manhood of the nation springs to arms at the call of duty, each man forsaking

"The idols of his sheltered house"

and paying to Honour and Patriotism

"Unflinching tribute of his vows."

Every nation which abolishes patriotism by proxy and takes the burthen and responsibility of war on its own shoulders contributes by that very act more to the true cause of universal peace than all the vapourings of the members of the Peace Society.

Secondly, those who are afraid of the dominance of a military caste being introduced by the adoption of compulsory service point to the many symptoms of such a state of things in Germany and Austria. But these objectors forget that what they see and condemn is the heritage of a past in which those countries struggled for national existence. Not only that, but the peoples of those countries had been accustomed to long centuries of tyranny under their rulers. So far, however, from civil and religious liberty having suffered since the introduction of universal military service among the nations of Europe, the march of liberty since 1860 has been unprecedented in the world's history; and remember that it is only since then that these nations, with the exception of Germany, have adopted the system. Indeed, the whole civilised world has now become so thoroughly impregnated with the ideas of freedom, and with the demand for the greatest liberty of the individual compatible with the safety of the State, that it is inconceivable that a reaction against those principles could be brought about by a measure adopted by a nation for its own security. And if this is inconceivable in the abstract, still more is it inconceivable in the case of Britain. For, if Continental nations, with their slow emergence from tyrannical rule and crushing disregard of the liberty of the individual, have actually attained a far wider measure of freedom since the introduction of personal military service, is not the history of the British people a sufficient guarantee that the principles which have been the mainspring of their political life will be preserved inviolate, even through the nation may, in a spirit of enlightened self-sacrifice, submit to a curtailment of *individual* liberty, so as to preserve the *freedom of the community*—*national* liberty, instead? I need only point to the free Republics of Greece and Rome in the past, and to that of Switzerland in the present to show that true liberty is perfectly compatible with the duty of obligatory military service.

My Lord, Ladies, and Gentlemen, there are many other points with which I should have liked to deal; but the subject is so large, that it is

difficult to include everything in the course of an hour's lecture. I must, therefore, regretfully leave the other objections, and refer enquirers to my book.

I have at any rate sketched for you briefly, and, I fear, very inadequately, the advantages which would accrue to this country and to this Empire from the adoption of compulsory military service for home defence.

That it is *necessary*, few will deny who have thoroughly studied the question of national defence. But I leave this question aside, and I affirm that its advantages alone make it worthy of our acceptance, as a sacrifice fitting to be offered to its country by a free people.

There are some people who, with a placid philosophy which gives them a certain air of superiority, are wont to answer somewhat in these terms if it is pointed out that there are grave signs of decadence in many aspects of the national life, a widespread idleness and luxury permeating all classes, and going hand-in-hand with an increasing irresponsibility of action and a glorification of the rights of the individual to the exclusion of *duty* and public spirit. "My dear Sir," says such a philosopher, "all this is in the natural course of history. All great nations have had their rise, their period of culmination, and their decay. The latter period has now begun for us, and there is no use trying to prevent the downward progress." Ladies and gentlemen, I do not believe this statement, and I do not agree with the reasoning supposed to be contained in these references to past history. For it leaves out one very essential point. All the great nations of the past, above all Greece and Rome, had nothing to stay their downward descent when it had once begun. They had had compulsory service for all free citizens in the days of their greatest glory, in the time of their most splendid achievements. They had forsaken this noble tradition, and that was undoubtedly one of the causes of their decay; nor was it possible for them to revert to that manly spirit of patriotism when they had become degenerate and effete. Quite otherwise is it with us. We have grown great, wealthy, and strong by a process which might be called almost natural in its unconscious effort of expansion. "We conquered and colonized half the world in a fit of absence of mind," as Professor Seeley says. Undoubtedly, too, we have had immense luck in that process, so that our gigantic Empire may appear to have been acquired somewhat too easily and without bringing with it a corresponding sense of responsibility for its defence.

Now, however, when we seem to have reached the limit of our expansion, this sense of responsibility is beginning to be felt, not only by us here in England, but by those younger nations, those Britains beyond the seas, who share with us the heritage of Empire. The war in South

Africa was perhaps needed to give a sense of reality to that vague feeling of solidarity which somewhat loosely united the British peoples. And with the realisation of the greatness of our heritage must come—*has* come, I hope—the earnest wish to rise to the responsibilities it entails. We, then, have at hand, in the adoption of compulsory military service, that tonic which was wanting in the case of Greece and Rome, a tonic, which, applied to the body social and politic, will immediately put a stop to those symptoms of anæmia and decadence of which we are told, and will produce in the future a race of Britons who shall be no whit behind their forefathers in courage, manliness, energy, and patriotism.

Shall we, then, hesitate at the sacrifice that is asked of us in order to render safe and inviolate the land which Shakespeare describes as :—

“This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise
This fortress built by Nature for herself,
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men—this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,

* * * * *

This blessed spot, this earth, this realm, this England”?

Shall we, I say, hesitate when this England, and the Empire of which she is the source and mainspring call upon us for honourable sacrifice? I think the answer is not doubtful. To quote Lord Rosebery's noble words at Glasgow, in November, 1900 :—“We will rather pray that strength may be given us adequate and abundant, to shrink from no sacrifice in the fulfilment of our mission; that we may be true to the high tradition of our forefathers; and that we may transmit their bequest to our children, aye, and please God, to their remote descendants, enriched and undefiled, this blessed and splendid dominion.”

Thus shall we, in truth, realise the ideal of Peace with Honour for the Empire and the Race by becoming—

Humble because of knowledge, *mighty by sacrifice*.

SIR ROBERT GIFFEN, K.C.B., LL.D., F.R.S. :—I feel it a great honour that you should have called upon me so soon after the reading of this excellent paper, but I fear that I have not a great deal to add to what the lecturer has said, except to express a general approval of the contents. I speak merely as a civilian, and I should hope before I leave the room to have the benefit of the preaching and the teaching of some of the experts who are here present upon this very important matter. One of the things the lecturer has said, which we must all agree with, I believe, is his expression of opinion in favour of an irresistible Navy, and his laying down that as the foundation of all his conceptions with regard to Army reform. Next, that he is in favour of the proper organisation of the

Regular Army as indispensable in the conditions of the Empire. It is with those two conditions granted that we listened to his lecture in favour of the compulsory service of all the able-bodied people in the Empire on behalf of the State. It is to some extent a question for experts what the requirements for military service may be : but, speaking as a civilian to civilians, I should like to call upon all those who are interested in the subject to agree in this, that while we can hardly follow military men as to what would be theoretically the best organisation for the defence of the Empire, there can be no harm in having the whole able-bodied population to fall back upon. If you had the ablest Commander-in-Chief that you could get at the top with a free hand, to see what should be done, it might be possible that a smaller call upon the manhood of the country would be sufficient for absolute safety. But, speaking as civilians with reference to all these expert discussions, we must see that in addition to a Regular Army, which may be sufficient for ordinary times, there is always, when war breaks out, a call for more men. However expert, however able your Army may be, there is always a call for more men. It is quite impossible for civilians to express any opinion as to whether a Reserve of 300,000, or 500,000, or, possibly, 600,000 men, is sufficient. We have no means as civilians for really deciding that point ; but we can quite see, for instance, that if 500,000 men would be sufficient according to expert military opinion—if they were all agreed upon it—yet it is also quite certain that if 500,000 men would just do, we should be none the worse for having 1,000,000 more men behind them. That is really the civilians' point of view, and that is one reason why I join in this demand for compulsory service. Speaking on the question of compulsion, I should like to say that there are plenty of other cases of compulsion according to law. The whole system of taxation, as has been pointed out by the lecturer, is a system of compulsion. The whole of the property and income of all the people of the country are at the service of the State if need be, and it is a very little extension of this principle that the services of each man, as far as he can render them, should be liable to be called upon by compulsion in case of necessity ; and that case of necessity means that you ought to prepare in time of peace for what may happen in time of war. I ought to add, perhaps, that I hardly agree with all the statements which Mr. Shee has made, but that is no reason why one should not agree with the general argument. He made some remarks, for instance, with regard to pauperism. I do not believe, if the matter were investigated, that we are any worse in this country as regards very poor people than our Continental neighbours. We have this condition of legal pauperism which it is very difficult to estimate, but we are not really worse than any of our Continental neighbours in respect of the very poor. As far as my information goes, from my acquaintance with Boards of Guardians, and people who are interested in the poor, there is no unemployed labour in our workhouses or subsidised by the Boards of Guardians which would be available for military service. There is no such thing. The so-called able-bodied labour, if you came to investigate it, would not be able-bodied labour that would be any use to you for the purpose of the Navy or Army. But, while not agreeing with every detail of the argument which the lecturer has used, I think one must express a general approval of the main argument, and I hope we shall have further enlightenment upon the subject from the experts who are to address the meeting.

Mr. CLINTON E. DAWKINS, C.B. (late Financial Member, Council of Governor-General of India) :—I feel a great deal of diffidence in rising at this point of the discussion before we have had the advantage of hearing the views of military experts on this subject. I may say with Sir Robert Giffen that I find myself in

general sympathy with Mr. Shee's lecture, without perhaps endorsing all the arguments—in sympathy so general that I am glad to have joined with him and other friends in a deliberate attempt to try and get this question considered by the public. It may be, perhaps, objected that we are premature in trying to get this question considered at this moment. For the first time, perhaps, in our country, at any rate for many years, an attempt has been made to set up a reasoned standard of our military strength—I refer to Mr. Brodrick's scheme for six army corps. It might be argued that it would be better to await the working out of that scheme. I think great credit is due to Mr. Brodrick for having made that attempt to set up a reasoned standard of military strength, but I remember the words he used when he was introducing the discussion. He said :—"While this country is willing to pay heavily to avoid compulsion, it is incumbent upon the Government to exhaust every means before bringing forward proposals of that nature." Now, I would submit that there are many arguments to induce us not to give that scheme a long time to develop the experiment. I think that many of us had in our hearts at the time, civilians as well as military, a conviction that that scheme must break down. Everything that has happened since it was introduced fortifies that conviction; the whole course of this war fortifies it. It is a half truth to say that Lord Kitchener has been supplied by the War Office with the soldiers for whom he has asked. It is a half truth, because Lord Kitchener has been supplied, not with soldiers, but with a proportion of soldiers and a large proportion of men whom he has had to keep at the bases and to train before he can pass them up into the fighting line. Demands have, in fact, been limited by the necessity for training a proportion of the men. That I think is one argument why we should proceed to a consideration of further measures, without waiting for time to show us the result of Mr. Brodrick's army corps scheme. There is another reason, Mr. Brodrick's scheme of army corps was largely based upon the Auxiliary Forces. If I recollect rightly, the three home army corps, or the three army corps not immediately designed for expeditionary service, were to be largely composed of Volunteers and Militia. Now, in the eyes of the War Office the Volunteer Force, however excellent it is in many respects, requires to be brought up to a higher level. We have lately seen several proposals put forward by the War Office for bringing up that Force to a higher level by insisting on a longer period of training. What has happened? In deference to the wishes of the Volunteers, that period of training which has been put forward has been successively reduced. The Government has been told, and told with absolute truth, that if those proposals are pressed the springs of Volunteering will be choked. Therefore, we are presented with this dilemma, either we are to insist on bringing up Volunteers to the desired level and by doing so choking Volunteering, or we are to whittle down the proposals to bring the Volunteers up to an efficient level to a minimum that will not be worth having. And with regard to the recruits for the Regular Army, I believe, in spite of the war-like feeling which still exists in our population, that the reports from the recruiting centres are bad, and I judge that they must be so by the way in which the Government has been obliged to keep on lowering the standard of physique until, as Lord Newton told us, it has been brought down to 5 feet, the height of a well-grown girl of 15 or 16. Therefore, I ask, even supposing that Mr. Brodrick's scheme were possible, that we could get the men—which we cannot—would any such scheme have placed us in a better position for the South African war? Would the Boers have gone as tightly into that war with us if they knew that we had an armed population behind us? I would also like to submit one or two arguments in favour of pressing on the consideration of this great question. One of these is the community of sentiment and feeling, born of a common

effort and common sacrifice, that now unites us and the Colonies. History teaches that federations are formed under the stress of some danger or of some common exertion. But many people point with complacency to the spirit shown by the Colonies, to the dim potentialities of our strength, as if that were enough. I say it is not enough. I say the opportunity ought not to be missed, and the moment has come when that magnificent spirit which has been shown ought to be clothed in some organisation of flesh and blood. Are we, indeed, more or less likely to be exposed to difficulties and hostilities in other parts of the world than we were when the South African war broke out? The feelings of foreign populations towards us, inexplicable and unjust as they may be, have not improved, but have worsened, distinctly worsened, during the course of this war, and are not likely to get better, if we can judge from the history of the past few months, until we can impose respect on our maligners. To pass to other considerations, many of us who are in no sense Jingoës believe that the Empire is, on the whole, and with everything discounted, a great responsibility, a great instrument of good that has been committed to our keeping. Shall we be able to discharge that responsibility unless the whole of us, both in these islands and through the Empire, feel some fellowship in that Empire, have some consciousness of what it means and of the ideals for which it stands? At the present moment the only way in which the masses of our population contribute to the existence of that Empire is through the unconscious contributions they make through the pint pot and the tobacco bowl. I submit that it is a nobler idea for us all, especially for those who are better off and who have been paying men—we call it a voluntary system—to fight their battles, the majority of whom have been driven into the Service by two great forces of compulsion—hunger and want of employment. I submit that it is a nobler ideal for everyone who is proud to belong to this Empire to contribute to handling it down undiminished as a glorious trust to our children by personal exertion and by personal sacrifice.

Colonel A. M. BROOKFIELD, M.P. (1st Cinque Ports R. V. Corps):—I should like, if I can find nothing else to say, at all events to take this opportunity of expressing the thanks that I think are due to Mr. Shee for the part that he has taken in connection with the subject we are discussing, not only this afternoon, but in the admirable, closely reasoned book which I hope most of you have seen, and which I hope all of you will make it your business to buy and to read, where he still further follows out the arguments that he has put before us to-day. This is one of those questions that move very rapidly: and I have been astonished at the rapidity with which public opinion seems to have been educating itself in the matter. I think that this is partly due to fright, to a wholesome alarm caused by the events of the last two years. It must have struck people that if, to use a very old argument, a little nation like the Boers can give us all this trouble and cause us all this trouble and loss of money, how should we have stood in a contest with two first-class European Powers? What would be the value, then, of boasting of our immunity from compulsory service? I often wonder how people can use the word "boast" at all. Whose boast is it? Our boast is that we escape compulsory service. The boasting, so far as anyone is entitled to boast, I think is with those who fill the office of deputies for the rest of the country, and do the work that they ought to be doing. But what I have always lamented is, that this voluntary service, this voluntary system, which is our boast or our shame, according to the way in which we employ the words, has produced such a lamentably bad average soldier as the general results show. Sir Robert Giffen a moment ago spoke of the wastage of war, of the huge number of men required to supply that waste. I believe the wastage would have been infinitely less if we had

had the average physique of the country fighting for us, instead of the average physique of the soldier produced by the voluntary system. Men, to the best of my belief, have died far more from sickness than from wounds and bullets. I do not think, for instance, that French troops—and we all remember the day when we used to laugh at French soldiers as something altogether ridiculous—would have gone into the hospital with enteric at the rate our soldiers went in; and I think it is time for the manhood, the best physique, the best intellect of the nation, to take their share of military service. Lord Newton spoke about people who needed conversion. I have noticed, my Lord, if I may make a rather personal observation, that your lordship's interest in this subject has grown very much since you left the House of Commons and entered the House of Lords.

The CHAIRMAN :—The war has taken place since then.

Colonel BROOKFIELD :—I believe that Members of Parliament are rather afraid of talking about conscription to their constituents. But "let the galled jade wince, my withers are unwrung." I believe you will find that these constituents are, after all, simply human beings like ourselves, and that if the thing is put fairly to them they will take a fair view of it. I believe that public opinion at this moment is very much in the mood for being readily educated on this subject. Where I think that we politicians have a right to complain is that we do not have a lead in these matters from the principal statesmen of the day. I venture to say that I think the attitude taken up by Lord Salisbury on this subject in public is simply deplorable. Mr. Shee has referred this afternoon, and he has also spoken in his book, with approval of Lord Salisbury's utterances at some gathering of the Primrose League. They are supposed to contain some cryptic approval of compulsion. Of course, Lord Salisbury is a great diplomatist, and his words may have been so contrived as to be susceptible of any explanation afterwards. Still, I remember his saying in so many words :—"We cannot have conscription"; which, I think, was at all events a plain utterance. And I think that on every occasion when it has been in his power to throw cold water on this movement he appears to have done so. As to how deeply he has studied the subject, I think we can form some opinion by his having incidentally recommended the adoption of rifle clubs. Then we have another statesman who at this moment has a great ascendancy of popularity—I allude to Mr. Chamberlain. I had occasion to inquire what his utterances were on the military question, and I ascertained that he had never made any speech about the Army. Well, I think it is time that he did. It would be extremely interesting. Or, again, we may take the case of Mr. Balfour. He has made two or three speeches about the war and the Army which have simply caused despair in the hearts of many well-disposed patriotic men. The impression conveyed to them was that he had not studied the subject, and was not studying it sufficiently. As to Mr. Brodrick, our Secretary of State for War, we imagine that he is with us on this subject; but it is impossible for one man alone to announce a policy of this kind. What I should like him to announce—it might cause some dismay at the time—would be, what I thoroughly expect he will have to announce at the end of this war, that he cannot get the men by the present system; and far from going on screwing down the average standard, I should be disposed to screw it up, so as to make his task a little more difficult. Mr. Clinton Dawkins a few moments ago spoke of the Volunteers. Everyone respects them; at all events, they want to do something that is of use; but when it comes to their selecting, as they are practically trying to do at this moment, exactly what they shall do and saying how much they shall do, I begin to think that that may help to break down the barrier between this country and conscription; and,

much as I like and esteem the Volunteers, I rather hope that that will be the result. I am not a pessimist about the future of the country. Even its military future I believe will come right. Unlike Rome and Greece, to whom we have been compared I think we have this immense advantage, of having had colonial ideas and colonial sentiment recently infused into us. I go further ; and if I may speak from what little experience I gained in South Africa, I should say that the Army will derive advantage from this infusion of colonial ideas which has lately taken place. I hope it will also have the effect of making the great bulk of the people thoroughly ashamed of the attitude in which they stand—which is gradually making us the laughing-stock of the rest of Europe, though I hope it may have the effect of making us adopt a rational system of national defence, such as our lecturer has recommended.

Colonel T. S. CAVE (1st Vol. Bn. Hampshire Regiment) :—I am very sorry that up to the present time no officer representing the Regular Army has given us the benefit of his opinion ; but I would venture to remind many here who know, and to tell those who do not know, that four or five years ago the subject for the prize essay, the gold medal for which is given by this Institution, was upon this very subject, namely, “The relative advantages and disadvantages of voluntary and compulsory service from a military and national point of view.” Those who may care to refer to the best opinion of Regular military officers cannot do better, I am sure, than look at this gold medal essay, by Major Ellison, and also at the essay which stood next to it in the award of the referees, namely, that of Major D. Henderson, which was also a most interesting and able article. I am glad to see so many interested in this subject, and I commend to them these able essays. Both the officers in question came to the conclusion that the voluntary system was the best suited to the requirements and sentiments of this country. Of course, we all should like to see—at least, I have no doubt that all here would like to see—a large number of more efficient men than we have ; but it is, nevertheless, as well that we should consider carefully where we are going. Now, do all the Continental nations find that the system of universal service is, from a military point of view, so sound as most of the speakers to-night have supposed it to be ? The most recent allusion that I have seen upon this subject is in a book written by Count Sternberg upon the Boer war. He was out there, and paid particular attention to the matter. He saw the fighting of our troops and that of the Boers who were opposed to them, and this is what he wrote :—“In my opinion, the nation in arms is a suicidal institution, unless one sifts out the bad element which takes up as much space and requires as much feeding as the good.” On another page he says :—“Europe must give up a system of general conscription, both for military and for social reasons.” Now, I do not say that he is right ; but I say, after seeing the fighting in South Africa, that is the opinion he expressed, and it is well for us to consider this question from all points of views. I myself made a very careful study of it, and I came to the somewhat paradoxical conclusion that, from a national point of view—that is from a commercial and social point of view—compulsory service was a most excellent thing for any country. I believe entirely with the lecturer and with those speakers who, after conversing with Continental manufacturers and business men, have said—and they have told me so, too—that they believe the military training has greatly improved the social and commercial qualities of their race. On the other hand, I cannot help thinking—and I conclude that Count Sternberg, too, is of that opinion—that if you are going to take everybody into the net, the willing and the unwilling—and you must remember that the very word “compulsion” implies that we shall get a large number of unwilling—when it comes to the actual fact of war, you will not find that you have as good a fighting machine. And

therefore, I would say that we should hesitate, looking at the matter seriously from a military point of view, before we take the number of men we require. For you must remember that we shall take them without selection, and without reference to their qualifications for military labour; we shall have to take those whom we draw by lot: and I very much fear that we shall depreciate rather than improve our Army for the actual stress of the campaign and the hour of battle. I think we should very carefully consider that subject. Where have we failed in South Africa? Has it been from the want of numbers?

A VOICE:—Everywhere, except in British courage.

Colonel T. S. CAVE:—We have been able to put five Britons into the field for each Boer. If, therefore, we have failed for lack of numbers, I would ask you by a simple method of arithmetic to arrive at how many men we should have required to beat a combination of two Continental Powers, and whether we should have been enabled to stand level with a Continental nation, if it is really from numbers that we have failed? There was a sentiment that I was glad to hear expressed, that we did not fail in the courage of our men. I do not believe for a moment that we failed from any general fault on the part of our officers. I believe the material of which the British Army is composed, from the Commander-in-Chief down to the last recruit, is the very best that can be produced in the world. We failed, in my opinion, from the lack of a sound organisation and a sound training. I cannot help thinking that so far as home defence is concerned, that what is required is more a matter of sound training and organisation than it is of greater numbers. There was no allusion in the lecturer's remarks, or in the remarks of those gentlemen who have spoken since, as to the numbers that we actually have available. There are at the present time in the country something like four or five hundred thousand men, of a sort. You laugh; but I believe they are a very good sort, and I do not think anybody has succeeded in proving anything to the contrary. Remarks have been made about the Volunteer Force failing to arrive at the standard of training that is desired by the military authorities. The gentlemen who made those remarks were not fully aware of the facts of the case. I can speak on this matter with some kind of authority, because I know what has been demanded, and I know what has been said by the Volunteers themselves. They did not say that they could not do, or that they would not do, the individual training that is required, they only ask that if it is to be done it should be paid for. What the Government has said is, "Please do the training, but we cannot give you any increase of grant to enable you to meet the expense." But I would ask, "Is it after all the training of the individual Volunteer that is required?" Does anybody find any lack of efficiency in those Volunteers who went out to South Africa as such? It has been said by several general officers, by every commanding officer who has spoken of those Volunteers who went out to South Africa, that they were most efficient soldiers in every possible respect. It cannot be, therefore, that very much more individual training is required of the men; but, at the same time, I do most thoroughly agree with every word that has been said, that the country is not in a secure state because we have not that efficient Army to put into the field that we ought to have; and more particularly I think that we ought to have such an Army when there is a possibility that, at any rate, a large proportion of the fleet may be required in Chinese or Japanese waters. Therefore, I most sincerely hope that something may be done to increase this efficiency; but I am firmly convinced that that increase must be more in a proper organisation of the whole force that is now available, rather than by seeking to get more men by compulsion for home defence. The suggestion does not touch the question of getting

more and better men to enlist for the Regular Army for service abroad, this is a proposition which is really a most difficult and pressing one, and one of those which ought to be taken in hand most seriously at the present moment. Compulsory service will not solve this problem ; it will rather tend to complicate it.

The meeting was then adjourned to Wednesday, 19th February. The discussion was resumed with Major Lord NEWTON in the Chair.

Major-General C. E. WEBBER, C.B., *p.s.c.* (late R.E.) :—The Institution is much indebted to Mr. Shee for his valuable contribution to the discussion of the great subject of compulsory *versus* voluntary military service. I use "military" as including Army and Navy. There is probably not one dissentient to the contention, that it is obligatory on every citizen to give of his strength and intelligence to ensure as far as possible in time of peace the success of the cause of his country when obliged to undertake war. Mr. Shee and the noble Chairman have referred to what they were pleased to call their civilian experience, as compared to that of so-called experts in such matters. I deprecate altogether such an attitude in men who evidently are not only students of, but who have shown themselves deeply interested in, these all-important questions. Naturally, Mr. Shee, in studying his subject, had before him the experiences and the results of the system of compulsory service in the nineteenth century. I notice that he has—and he is by no means the first—alluded more than once to the Swiss system, which may be regarded as one which falls least heavily on the individual and the taxpayer. Incidentally let me remark, that, of all the smaller States of Europe, Switzerland is the one which is least likely ever again to be interfered with, and, therefore, the one which being least vulnerable, requires a military organisation, the most simple and the least expensive. Did Mr. Shee realise that the whole period of training of the Swiss riflemen on foot between the ages of 20 and 33 is 175, and between 33 and 45 is 22, days ? Does he realise that out of 26,000 young men who become available every year only 16,000 are incorporated in the Swiss (so-called) Army ? And thus, that 39 per cent. of the male population are *not* subject to the incidence of "universal military service," and have no chance of securing the many personal advantages which he has so graphically described ? There is another point which, to my mind, should largely discount the enthusiasm with which this subject is always dealt with by its devotees, which is found underlying all Mr. Shee's glowing pictures, and that is, that while the advantages to the individual citizen of the military training, and consequently to the community in time of peace, are strikingly set forth, there are no indications whatever that the author has convinced himself that any Army thus recruited, for purposes even of what is called home defence, could be efficiently used in time of war. My Lord, it is exactly 365 days since I stood where Mr. Shee is to-day, and ventured in a paper on Army Reform I read before this Institution to give what I called my views of the "Organisation of the Nation," which I mentioned had been waiting for some years "until" I thought "the public mind was ripe" for them, and which I claimed "to be the most scientific system of national defence which is suitable to the race," and also to the new conditions of warfare which science has in the last fifty years placed at the disposal of those who will use them. My proposal was based on the fact that for *every man* required "to fight," *i.e.*, to kill or strike, or to be instrumental in killing or striking the enemy either in *personnel* or *matériel*, "two or three men are required to execute the necessary works and perform the necessary civil duties in this modern highly civilised country, when threatened with invasion or after invasion takes place, . . .

to help in maintaining order, to keep going all the great national public services from which reserve soldiers have been drafted to the fighting bodies, and to look after the vast population of women and children who would be unavoidably left in an unprotected condition." I boldly assert that the Volunteer is a better fighting man in every respect, particularly if he belongs to the races in these Islands and our Colonies, than the man who is forced by law to join the combatant ranks. My scheme practically divides the whole manhood of the nation into two classes, namely :—Firstly, those who voluntarily join the ranks of the Navy, the Army, the Militia, and the so-called Auxiliary Forces, who submit to a sufficiency of training to be efficient units of fighting organisations on land or sea, either on full pay or in the Reserve, and who wear the King's uniform. Secondly, every other male between the ages of 18 and 55, who would be compulsory registered as a non-combatant, would be enrolled in a local corps, to be called (say) "Auxiliary Defence Corps" (A.D.C.), to be in numbered companies with the names of the county or city added to the title. In my former paper I called it "The Defence Works Corps," but the title is not of importance. These would wear a badge. The first conditions of service in the A.D.C. in time of peace to be, that each individual on reaching 18 years shall give a few days to learn the elements of foot-drill and company movements without weapons, and shall thereafter report himself at the headquarters of the company unit, nearest his residence for the time being, once, twice, or (say) three times a year. The local development that these trainings and assemblies might take would be the outcome of experience. One fundamental condition would be absolutely inviolable, viz., that these men, if they desire to actually fight for their country, must volunteer to join either the Permanent Army, or the Militia, or the Navy, or the Volunteers, or the Yeomanry, to which it would become a privilege to be admitted. I submit that under this system the difficulties of recruiting for the Regular Army, even at the present rates of pay, would soon diminish. The operation of this national organisation, immediately war became imminent, would at once work out as follows :—First, the Regular Army of (say) 200,000, filled up with the Reserves, and leaving out the men under 20 years of age, including 90,000 men in India and the Colonies, would provide a standing force of 100,000 men for three army corps, ready to go anywhere. For *home* land defence there would be the Militia, Volunteers, and Imperial Yeomanry. Like the Regular Army, these would be composed of men who had volunteered to serve, and under conditions which would have ensured a better training than heretofore. Of these, one-third could be under arms in 24 hours, one-third in a week, and the remainder in a month, say, a total of 1,000,000 men. Let it be remembered that each of these 1,200,000 fighting men would have joined voluntarily, under the legal obligation that, if he did *not* do so, he must serve in the A.D.C. Every man who had what might be called the soldierly spirit in him would, subject to fitness in all respects, have to a large extent his choice of corps. The spirit lately proved to exist in these peoples would, I submit, result in the applications to serve in one branch or another outnumbering the vacancies. Second, the members of the compulsory service—Auxiliary Defence Corps (or A.D.C.) would, when national mobilisation is decided on, report at the headquarters of their units, but, only when and as they are actually thrown out of their regular employment would they be required to serve. The pay and rations they would be entitled by law to receive while serving would be no inducement to them to leave their usual means of earning their living. The conditions of service would be that the married men would be employed where they could return nightly to their homes—the unmarried men anywhere in the United Kingdom. I have estimated that between 300,000 and 500,000 would become immediately available when real danger arose, and that eventually they might number

2,000,000 if the war were protracted. The details for officering and organising these unarmed units in time of peace for employment in time of war requires more time than I can ask for at this meeting, but I would emphasise some advantages in which the old nineteenth century compulsory universal military service is deficient, and which are secured by my proposals. Every man engaged in what our lecturer calls the "dangerous trade" of warfare, would be so, under my proposal, voluntarily, instead of, compulsory. The voluntary system would exist under the best conditions, because all those who so volunteered would be chiefly led to do so, both to escape compulsion in the form of having to join the A.D.C., and because they would feel that fighting or soldiering was a *métier* for which they had an inclination. There would be a growing disposition for married men to leave the Volunteer forces and revert to the A.D.C., which is an advantage. The enrolment in the A.D.C. under the conditions I have described would at once provide employment for the large and increasing body of males between 18 and 55, whose means of livelihood would almost immediately cease when war begins, and whose idleness would be an untold source of danger; and of these, those that were married would not be separated from their families. The services of the 39 per cent. in the case of Switzerland unsuited for military fighting service, would, under my proposal, especially those most requiring discipline and control, not remain unappropriated, and anxiety about what they would do would be removed.

The CHAIRMAN :—This meeting is called for the purpose of discussing a particular principle, and personally I rather deprecate entering into details, especially as our time is limited. The discussion of principles is of the first necessity, and I hope the discussion will be confined to those principles.

Major-General J. B. STERLING (late Coldstream Guards) :—The lecture which has been so ably given by Mr. Shee can only be taken in conjunction with his book, which has now been published cheaply by the Army League from a purely patriotic sentiment, and that book is likely to be far more widely circulated than it could be in the circumstances under which it first appeared. For that good action I think we are extremely indebted to the present Chairman, who, in the most disinterested way, took up the question of the cheap dissemination of a very valuable publication. With regard to the points that Mr. Shee has brought forward, the scheme is open to a very severe criticism on certain matters, but on one point we are absolutely agreed with him. We have heard a great deal lately of removing the writing from the slate; but we Britishers wish to prevent the handwriting appearing on the wall. The fact that the author has brought forward a scheme which is reasonable and coherent, though open to criticism in detail, is a matter which is of extreme value to us. Certainly his statistics will not stand argument. In the first place, the question of the amount of insurance he gives as £100,000,000 is absolutely deceptive. The utmost I can make it, on expert examination, is £11,000,000. That is one specimen. Another is the amount of money that would be required under his scheme and the saving that would accrue. Of course, if you take the Continental Armies, who are forced to serve and are only paid 2½d. a day, you cannot compare that state of things with the expenditure of competition in the free labour market, and, therefore, that question falls to the ground as regards our Army at the present day: the simile will not bear examination. One more point. The author takes as the remaining sum a saving, I think, of £10,000,000 or £12,000,000, but he has eliminated the fact that material is a constantly increasing expenditure in these modern days of rapidly developing science and rapidly progressing armaments of all mechanical kinds. But at the same time there is a large substratum of fact in what he says, that if we had 500,000 men trained—I would add, and organised—the country would not be subject to panics,

which are almost as injurious to the best interests of this country as some of the minor wars. It is panic that you have to guard against, as was seen in the American War, when the fleet was not allowed to be handled, for fear of popular feeling in New York. It is against panic that we have to guard. The sentimental question is as important as the physical question. Now, I would ask the lecturer to consider, and you as an audience, who are competent to consider, because it is one of the gravest questions we have to deal with, How you are going to organise these men in the enormous numbers he proposes? Roughly speaking, the male population of Great Britain is 20,000,000, and I may assume that in any given year of what I call the military puberty age there are approximately 300,000 people who become efficient. 300,000 men coming up each year demands a very large staff to train them. The shorter the time the men are under the training and the younger the men are, the more efficient in all technical matters must your officers be. Again, we have the greatest military difficulty to face of any nation in the world. The German nation has not a tithe of our difficulty. They have merely to take their men and keep them in their own country, with such few exceptions that they are not worth considering. There is another point which I think is worth considering. It is said that the military training of the German nation is that which has conduce^d most largely to their success in the struggle for existence between nations. I say that that requires very careful analysis. Of course, they are subject to military discipline; they are also very well educated. But with regard to military conscription, the French are subject to it—are you frightened of their trade success? The Italians are subject to it—are you frightened of their trade success? The Russians are subject to it—are you frightened of their trade success? Those who hold that line must prove it and put it down as an unattackable proposition, that it is the military service and not the mental and physical quality of the German nation—which is extremely high—that conduces to their success in trade in all parts of the world. I would bring in another example for comparison. Would you compare the success of the Americans? They have no compulsory service. If you start a thesis like that, you must turn it well over and see if it is as sound as a proposition of Euclid, or else you must find some other proposition that can be more authoritatively set down as an *abiter dictum*. I have spoken only for a few minutes on the question raised in Mr. Shee's valuable lecture; the text is ample, and one could go on for hours. I have, however, mentioned one or two questions which I think are well worthy of consideration by this important meeting, because I look upon a meeting here on technical points, such as these, as the yeast which leavens the whole mass of military opinion in this country. I leave the whole question of the supreme value of the Navy and the weak parts of the argument which have been brought forward as regards them to those who know here the Navy and appreciate it. I appreciate it, but I do not know it sufficiently to venture to touch upon it.

Admiral Sir N. BOWDEN-SMITH, K.C.B.:—I think we must all admit that the matter which has been brought before us by Mr. Shee is of great national importance. But before I venture to offer a few criticisms on his paper I should like to put two questions to the audience. The first is: How would these proposals of Mr. Shee affect the recruiting question? He affirms, and I think most of us would agree with him, that we must have a voluntary professional Army for foreign service. And if these proposals tended to stop men from enlisting we should be in a rather awkward predicament. I do not say they would do so, but it is a matter to be considered by the military, especially by those who have to do with recruiting. Secondly, I would ask of those who are satisfied with the present condition of things, and who think that

there is no reason for any change—Supposing Lord Kitchener to-morrow telegraphed for 10,000, or even 5,000, more trained men to go out to South Africa, could the Government send them?

Colonel Sir HOWARD VINCENT :—Yes.

Admiral Sir N. BOWDEN-SMITH :—I am very glad to hear it. As regards the naval side of the question, it is much more complicated than the military; a very much more difficult question, especially as regards reserves. If we were engaged in a naval war our great difficulty would be to find a sufficient number of engineers and stokers, artificers and trained mechanics. It is possible that under this scheme, if we had compulsory service, a certain number of men who are employed as firemen in the mercantile marine, or miners, or people engaged in gas-works and such-like industries, would, by the offer of higher wages, be induced to serve their year or two years on board a ship of war as stokers instead of serving in the ranks of the Militia. But I very much doubt it. When the lecturer says that his scheme would produce an adequate and an efficient naval reserve, I am bound to say that until I see all the details of the scheme fully drawn up I am not prepared to agree with him on that point. You asked us, my Lord, not to go into details; but I wish to point out that the lecturer is not quite correct in stating that the Cape Colony presented a cruiser to the nation. In alluding to the splendid co-operation of the Colonies with the mother country during this war, he tells us that Cape Colony has given a first-class cruiser, the "Good Hope," to this country. In fact, I understand he imagines the "Good Hope" was built in South Africa and has lately arrived here. The "Good Hope" was built in England. It is a fact that the Cape Colony did originally propose, if I remember rightly, to give a first-class cruiser to the country, but afterwards reconsidered the matter, and are now contributing £30,000 a year towards her cost. With regard to his allusion to the pauper question, the author tells us that our paupers are more numerous than those of any other foreign country, but I would point out that most of the Continental nations have no Poor Law system such as ours, and therefore cannot possibly give the fairly reliable details that we publish every week in our papers in England. I also agree with Sir Robert Giffen that he overstates the number of able-bodied paupers in our workhouses. Many so-called able-bodied would probably be found feeble-minded. I do not offer these criticisms in any hostile spirit, because I for one, speaking generally, am inclined to agree with compulsory service for home defence. I agree with it because I think it would tend to the safety of this Kingdom and to the welfare of the Empire generally, and I believe it would be a good thing for the young men of this country if a large proportion of them had to undergo a year's or two years' training and discipline. For that reason I think we are indebted to Mr. Shee for bringing the subject before the country, and I can assure him that the Council of the Institution appreciate his efforts. Not only his lecture, but the discussion, will be printed in the JOURNAL, and will be circulated and read throughout the Empire.

The CHAIRMAN :—As the Bishop of Chester is present, perhaps he will give us the benefit of his views on the matter.

The Right Rev. F. J. JAYNE, D.D. (Bishop of Chester) :—The responsibility of calling upon me to speak, Sir, is entirely upon your own shoulders. There are at least two objections to a man of my profession and experience attempting to say anything on such a subject as this before the present audience. ("No!") It is very good of you to put it in that way; but if I were standing outside

of myself, I should say to myself, first: You are a clergyman meddling with matters outside your own province; and secondly, you are a civilian speaking in the presence of experts and professional men. I think it might be possible to say a little on the other side. In the first place, when a man becomes a clergyman he does not cease to be a member of the commonwealth—he does not cease to be a citizen. On the contrary, he ought to try to be as earnest and intelligent and patriotic a citizen as he possibly can be. Again, speaking from the clerical point of view, it seems to me that the subject with which this paper is concerned is one that ought to be very near indeed to the clerical heart, because it is essentially the subject of peace. A strong England means, of course, peace for England; and besides that, a strong England means peace for the world. We shall all, I think, without exaggeration, hold that amongst the influences at work in the world on the side of peace, there is none more potent and none more sincere than the influence of England; and, therefore, a weak England means a peril to the peace of the world. I come next to the technical part of the question, upon which I am not competent to speak at all. For example, I mean, how far is the armour of defence in which we have hitherto been trusting still trustworthy under new conditions? That is a question upon which professional opinion must give the lead, and it would be presumption on my part to attempt to give an opinion on that. ("No, no!") But, my Lord, I think even the man in the street—the very useful and weighty order to which I belong—can see that there are very serious features indeed about the present condition of things. I think Admiral Bowden-Smith appealed just now to this audience to say whether, if Lord Kitchener telegraphed for 10,000 or 5,000 trained troops, they could be sent out at once; and, if I did not misunderstand his attitude, he seemed to be somewhat sceptical whether that provision could be accomplished. At all events, coming back again to the civilian, we all know that a question of this sort must ultimately be settled, not by even the most illustrious generals and admirals, but by the ordinary voter. I understand that the object of Mr. Shee's book, the object of his paper, and the object of this discussion is to bring emphatically and fruitfully before the minds of all sorts and conditions of men what is a matter of the utmost importance to the welfare of the British Empire and to the welfare of the world. There is just one other point which I think falls within my province, and that is the effect upon the national character of a system of a compulsory home service. I cannot help thinking that it is, at all events, arguable, that the young man of our country would gain a very great deal by having to undergo a system of discipline, such as is proposed. There are many ugly features about the present development of national character which, I think, we might hope to see corrected, in some degree, at all events, by such a system as Mr. Shee contemplates. All of us have heard of that curious legend of certain young Englishmen who were supposed to have left their native land and gone to the United States, because they thought the peril of compulsory service was looming in the distance. I confess I should like to hear more about the facts of their existence before I believe in those young men, for I think it is a legend. But supposing there is such a spirit as that amongst young Englishmen, it constitutes—does it not? a most grave peril, and the sooner we bring a more patriotic spirit to bear upon the discipline of their character the better. One thing that we have to do, if we can, is to put away the mistaken notion of what constitutes freedom. It may be said that compulsory service is inconsistent with the spirit of liberty; but that all depends upon your definition of freedom or of liberty. If by freedom you mean that an individual or a nation should be free to develop his or its best life, then the man or the nation must be prepared to undergo a great deal of self-sacrifice and self-discipline in order to obtain that power or self-

development ; and we believe that the self-development of England upon right lines is for the good of the world. I must again ask you, Mr. Chairman, to bear the brunt of my responsibility.

Colonel the Earl of WEMYSS, A.D.C. (late London Scottish Rifle Volunteers) :— I have a bad cold, and I really came here to listen more than to speak ; but as I am heart and soul for the principle of the lecture so ably given to this Institution, I am very glad to be here to express the strong feeling I have in favour of compulsory service for home defence. It is nothing new for me ; I have been fighting this battle for the last half century in every possible way, speaking in public about it to my own constituents, in Westminster Hall, in the House of Commons, in the House of Lords, and in all possible directions. I can then say this—when you hear so much of the hostility of the people to compulsory service—that it is a libel on the patriotism of the people. One friend of mine sitting there (Sir Howard Vincent) is so hostile to compulsory service that he intends, if any Government presumes to propose such a thing, to fight against it until his last breath. Well, I, at any rate, have not found this hostility among those that I have addressed, for speaking, as I have said, in all manner of places and to all sorts and conditions of men, I have never, when I have advocated compulsory service for home defence in some mild form, had a word said in opposition to that view. That is an absolute fact in an experience extending over nearly half a century. But you cannot get the Government to take it up. That was the history of our becoming Volunteers. I became a Volunteer because I believed in compulsory service and because the Government would not do their duty and enforce it. I became a Volunteer in 1859 and left it in 1900. Why ! For the same reason that I took it up, simply on patriotic grounds. I found that the existence of the Volunteers was the shelter-trench, the kopje, behind which all our Governments have taken shelter in order not to put in force compulsory service, as it is their duty to do. So that there is no difference in principle between the able gentleman who wrote this lecture and myself, and I would express my gratitude to him as a friend of compulsory service for his very able lecture and for his, perhaps, still more able book, which is really a textbook on the subject. What I above all compliment him upon is the title of the book, “The Briton's First Duty,” viz., compulsory service—and so it is by the Constitution. The only difference between the lecturer and myself is as to the application of this principle. Now I hear all round me—following General Trochu's example, who said, *J'ai mon plan*—that everybody has his pet plan. That, I hold, is not the question we are here to consider. We are here to consider the one question of compulsory service. Are you or are you not in favour of it ? Do you or do you not believe it is the only foundation upon which you can safely build ? That, in my view, is the question. I have no plan of my own. It is sufficient for me that the time-honoured military system of this country rests on compulsory service. The lecturer wishes compulsory service to be universal. Our system is not that. Compulsion takes the form of the Militia Ballot, to which the lecturer objects. The whole thing rests on the Ballot. That is the law of the land, and I can cite many great authorities in its favour upon the question. Lord Dalhousie, the Minister of War ; Graham's Commission on the Army ; the Recruiting Commission ; Sir James Scarlett ; Lord Mansfield ; Mr. Cardwell, who had fourteen clauses in his Army Bill of 1870 for the purpose of reviving the Militia Ballot ; and Lord Lansdowne, who put on the table of the House of Lords two years ago a Bill to bring the Ballot up to date, suiting the local quotas to the changes of the population. Lord Lansdowne, for the same reason that they have always left the thing alone, allowed that Bill to remain derelict, and there it is. I

hold, then, with these authorities—and am quite ready to shelter myself behind them—that the Ballot is the foundation of our existing military system, and that is the best way of applying compulsory service for home defence. You see, I have no plan of my own: I only take what exists. But Mr. Shee says the ballot is unjust and unequal, and therefore because he thinks it would be hard upon those on whom it fell he wishes everybody to be treated equally hardly. I have always held, and I wrote to that effect in the year 1870—it is a very old objection—that instead of being a hardship, it is an alleviation of the principle of compulsory service. To prove that it is an alleviation I will ask if any body of men had done anything which condemned them all to be shot, would they consider it a hardship if they were decimated instead of being all killed? I think that the way to deal with this question is simply to raise the existing military system from the ground on which successive Governments have allowed it to lie. I have said sufficient to show that I am in thorough sympathy with the lecturer, and I greatly admire his lecture and his book. It will be invaluable that that book should go broadcast throughout the country, and we are greatly indebted to Lord Newton for having brought the book within the range of the masses of the people. I will only say in conclusion that I do not know whether those who hear me are satisfied with what is being done in what one may call Army Reform or re-organisation. My theory is that no re-organisation is wanted. All that is wanted is proper administration and the putting into line of the existing time-honoured military system, just now a dead letter. That is all that is wanted. But, on the contrary, we are to have a new system, and to avoid raising the question of the ballot and compulsory service, what has been done? We are having an organisation which rests on nothing. When it first came out I wrote to the *Times* to say that it appeared to me this so-called re-organisation was founded upon begging and bribery. It was begging the Volunteers to undertake duties which by the Constitution they were never intended to undertake, and which I think is a mistake. When my late regiment sent a company to South Africa I took no interest in it. Why? Because I thought that before Volunteers volunteered for foreign service they should cease to be Volunteers. The whole principle of Volunteers is home service. It is a slur upon those who did not go. You established in the force the stay-at-homes, distinguishing them from the others; and whatever the enthusiasm at the time may have been, I think that is an entirely wrong principle and contrary to the best interests of the force and of the country. What they ought to have done was resign, and then as many of them as possible should have been encouraged to volunteer. In any system of organisation we might have two classes of Volunteers: those whose interests and duties keep them at home, and those who being freer are willing to be put on the list to go abroad at any time, anywhere. As regards what is being done, as I have said, it is begging and bribery, begging the Volunteers to do what they were not intended to do, and by five shillings a day bribing and getting that most extraordinary animal, the "Imperial Yeoman," who is found and bought in the streets of London, who was never on a horse in his life, and who is taught to ride at Aldershot or somewhere else. A most nondescript animal, most strangely named. I do not think that will succeed. The whole thing must crumble away. It has not even the foundations of a house of cards; it is nothing but building castles in the air. And we know why these castles are being built in the air. It is because those who are responsible for the safety of this nation are afraid to fulfil their duty and to enforce the existing law of compulsory service. They tell you the people of this country will not submit to it. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman said something of that kind, as do many others. Well, I have tested it. A year or two ago I sent a circular round to all chairmen of county councils, lords-

lieutenant, heads of chambers of commerce and chambers of agriculture, mayors, provosts, and chief magistrates of burghs, asking two questions: (1) Are you satisfied with the present state of things? and (2) Do you believe the people of this country would accept a mild form of compulsory service for home defence? The answers to those questions came back as follows: 75 per cent. answered the first question by saying "No," and two to one answered the second question by saying "Yes."

Colonel Sir C. E. HOWARD VINCENT, K.C.M.G., C.B., A.D.C., M.P. (Queen's Westminster V.R.C.):—I am sure that everyone who has heard Lord Wemyss speak and has watched his work earnestly hopes that he may be spared for another half century to carry on the same vigorous work for the country which he has carried on during the past half century. But I am sure that Lord Wemyss would not wish it to go out from the Royal United Service Institution to the Imperial Yeomanry in South Africa, who are doing very arduous and very difficult service at the present time, that there is any reflection whatever upon them.

LORD WEMYSS:—Pray let me explain that. I do not for the world want to be misunderstood in this matter. They have done splendid service. My point is this—that the Government are in such a fix to get men, and mounted men, that they are giving 5s. a day to one class of men and 1s. 3d. to another, and that these so-called Yeomen are men in a great measure found and bought in the streets for 5s.

Colonel Sir HOWARD VINCENT:—I knew the noble lord would be anxious to correct any misapprehension which might arise with regard to any hasty words he might have uttered on that matter. I need hardly remind you on this subject that the great proportion of the Volunteers who went out, went out only on soldier's pay, and not on 5s. I should like to say a few words with regard to the paper. I came here to hear the arguments which would be adduced in favour of compulsory service at the present time. Mr. Shee's book, "The Briton's First Duty," is a very valuable contribution indeed to current literature, and no one will deny for one moment that the Briton's first duty is, if he is possibly able to do it, to render some service in the defence of his country. But upon the paper itself I should venture to offer one or two words of criticism. Before doing so upon the military aspect, I should like to direct his attention, and the attention of the audience, to the observations with regard to the physique of this country compared with the physique of other countries. I admit that in Germany you do see well-drilled and erect young men, but I have yet to learn that the physique of the English young men on the whole, and certainly of Australians and Canadians, is in any degree whatever inferior to the physique of the German, the Frenchman, the Italian, or the Russian. In every athletic competition we are superior to them, and there are no young men in the world who would have gone through the enormous strain of the South African campaign so well as the 200,000 or 300,000 young Englishmen. I have to ask the lecturer to tell us what he proposes to alter—what he proposes to gain by his system? Now, what is it we have at the present time? We have an Army of 250,000 men, in round numbers; we have 100,000 Militia, we have 300,000 Volunteers, and we have 30,000 Yeomanry; or 680,000 available in this country, of which 250,000 is an Army we can send anywhere. Very large numbers of the Militia and Volunteers and Yeomanry will volunteer for foreign service if the occasion arises. Then take the Empire. In Canada there are 30,000 Militia, in Australia 20,000 Volunteers, in South Africa 10,000, and in India upwards of 100,000 troops, including native troops, and in other Colonies 40,000. That is 200,000. That

gives us a total of 880,000 men available at the present time. Lord Wemyss thoroughly understands the Volunteer force and he will bear me out when I say that the turnover of the Volunteer force is about 25 per cent. every year, that is 75,000 men as a rule leave the Volunteer force out of a total strength of 300,000. Now the majority of those 75,000 men continue for about ten years of a military age and are able to render military service if the occasion should arise. That gives us a reserve which would certainly be available in case of need of at least 750,000 men. Add to this the same number who retire annually from the Militia in Canada, the Volunteers in Australia, and other Colonial forces, and that gives us exactly the figure which the author proposes, an available force of some 2,000,000. Now, he proposes to take away this, and he proposes to impose upon us compulsory military service of one year between the ages of 18 and 23. It is evident from the passage which I have quoted from the lecturer's paper that he has been a great deal abroad; but I would ask him if he has ever very carefully followed out the enormous superiority which English young men derive from the freedom they have from State service in those critical ages of their career, 18 to 23? The whole of a man's career depends upon his being free between the ages of 18 and 23. ("No!") Well, answer it! It is no good saying "No." Answer it! You yourselves, gentlemen, if you went into the Army, went in between the ages of 18 and 23. Had you been compelled to go to the bar for one year between those ages, would you have been so fit for the profession which you entered? Certainly not. If there is one thing which has given us superiority in this Empire it is the way in which our young men go over the sea, found new homes, establish new industries, and form new careers in distant parts of the world: and they do that between the ages of 18 and 23, when they have left school, before they have settled down. To compel these young men between the ages of 18 and 23 to give up one year of their life to the service of the State, to refrain from prosecuting their studies, is, I say, a thing which is not warranted by the condition of affairs. If we found men were not coming voluntarily forward for military service it would be another matter; but they are coming forward voluntarily. If they were not doing so there would be something to be said in favour of compulsory military service; but when you find they are doing so, I ask what the lecturer has to gain by the advocacy of his scheme of compulsory military service? Then he tells us his scheme would give us a peace footing of about 250,000 trained men, with a war footing of about 2,000,000. But the Volunteers give you alone 300,000 at the present time, or 50,000 more than what he thinks he would gain by his compulsory military service. Lord Wemyss has told us just now that in addressing public meetings and constituents in this country on conscription he has never met with much opposition from his audience.

Lord WEMYSS :—I have never met with any.

Colonel Sir HOWARD VINCENT :—Why? Because they know that no Minister, no Government, would ever be so insane as to impose compulsory military service on this country. Let anyone stand up here who will go before an audience and attempt to get into Parliament upon compulsory military service! He will be put very quickly indeed at the bottom of the poll. He will never have an opportunity of advocating those views. Let me see the man! Has there been an individual who did it? Can the noble lord produce any Parliamentary address of his in which he urged that he was going to make his cardinal point in Parliament the advocacy of compulsory military service, taking away twelve months from the life of young men between the ages of 18 and 23? Let me see it! He would be returned at the bottom of the poll.

It is a good thing to have had this discussion. It is perhaps a good thing to show that the Royal United Service Institution, consisting largely of people who are interested in military matters, largely of men who serve in the Army, consider compulsory military service essential. Let it go forth to the country that that is their view, and then let us hear what the country has to say about it. Let us hear what the great mass of the people have to say about it. The lecturer says it is only white men who are to give this compulsory military service; but white men only form one-tenth of the King's subjects. Are the remaining 360,000,000, or whatever it is, of the King's subjects to give no compulsory military service in any form? Then, again, if we are to do it, it is obvious that the other parts of the Empire should do it too. The system of self-government which our Colonies have gives no likelihood that they would consent to anything of this kind. If the lecturer has studied the administration of the Colonies and the feeling of Colonial people he would know perfectly well that no Minister could ever hope for assistance from the electors of any self-governing Colony who advocated compulsory military service for the men of that Colony in any shape or form.

Colonel BROOKFIELD:—May I ask my honourable and gallant friend whether he asserts that compulsory military service is not enforced in any of the Colonies?

Colonel Sir HOWARD VINCENT:—What Colonel Brookfield refers to is Canada.

Mr. SHEE:—And Cape Colony.

Colonel Sir HOWARD VINCENT:—In what shape or form? Can you give me the date of the law?

Mr. SHEE:—1878. It is the law, but it is a dead letter.

Colonel Sir HOWARD VINCENT:—It is a dead letter. There we have it. It is in the law, but it is a dead letter. To a large extent it is a dead letter in Canada, because, although it is the law of Canada, Canada is placed in an extremely anomalous position. My time is up, so I will not keep you any longer. I only came here in order to hear the arguments which were advanced in favour of compulsory military service, and I do hope some subsequent speaker will tell you what he hopes to gain by an alteration of the present system.

Sir JOHN COLOMB, K.C.M.G., M.P. (late Captain, Royal Marine Art.):—The question of compulsory service has two aspects, in my mind: the aspect of necessity and the aspect of expediency. The necessity really depends, from a military point of view, upon the dangers to which you are exposed. In the observations I shall make, I will confine myself entirely to that point. I am not going to touch upon social and economical questions, or the advantages or disadvantages of compulsion. I have quite an open mind on that, and there really would not be time to touch upon everything. The lecturer has said nothing on military or strategic grounds as to the dangers which induce the necessity which he maintains exists. He says a great deal of what he thinks we want, but he does not say sufficiently why he thinks we want it. Looking at it from the point of view of the necessity to our Empire, it is really the dangers to which we are exposed which are the ruling factors in the problem. He says we want three things: a strong Navy, military garrisons abroad, and an immense Militia Army for home service. Having baldly stated what we want, he then elaborates his method of obtaining it, which is, in brief, partial compulsory service for the Navy, and wholesale compulsory military service applied to all parts of our Empire all over the world. The only real explanation

he gives on strategic and military grounds he expresses in a metaphor; and with all respect I must say the metaphor has the effect on my mind of exciting my curiosity, because I cannot in the least understand it. I prefer my own. Looking at the question of the use of force for protection, metaphorically my declaration has always been this: "The Navy is the shield and the Army is the spear of your Empire." Now, I object to his attitude of mind in approaching this question, and I see it by the use of the phrase a "strong Navy." A "strong Navy" is not a fit phrase; it is a false phrase as describing the first necessity of the British Empire. The true phrase is a Navy which is sufficient to secure the freedom of the sea, and that is a Navy sufficient to deny any freedom to your enemies. Now, we cannot exist in an island except under these conditions, and with oceans rolling between our provinces we must cease to be an Empire if we cannot maintain them. Therefore the words, "strong Navy," I think, leads him into considerable trouble. It will be observed that I join direct issue with the lecturer on the point of necessity which he raises. Otherwise it is a very interesting and very curious question, especially when you look at the commercial, the social, and educational aspect of it. But that is not my point. If you have the freedom of the sea, without which you cannot exist, you do not want this immense local army here, nor do you want it in your Colonies. I agree that, under the present arrangements, it is a question of making men efficient, and of the inducements you offer to your Regular force, and the organisation of your whole forces. Looking at the question from the point of view that we are an Imperial people, and not merely an island people, I boldly assert that a compulsory military system need not and can not be imposed. You cannot impose it in any Colony. So far as the island people are concerned, in order to bring it within the range of practical politics you have to persuade the people and convince the people that compulsory service is a necessity. I say that you can never convince an island people and a common-sense people that it is so. There may be a misunderstanding. I am speaking of local compulsory service limited to service within the territory in which the force is raised, and which service is not to be extended beyond the sea. Let me take the position of the British people as an Imperial people. I say that to a people in that position, with oceans rolling between their provinces, military compulsory service is of no use to the Empire unless compulsory service is for service over sea for great military combinations for the defence of the Empire. I have heard nothing, in spite of the most able arguments and facts produced by the lecturer, both in his lecture and in his book, in disproof of this, and I remain an unconverted sinner. I say that compulsory service is not a principle the British people will accept. The final point is this: I think I can see that the lecturer's real object and aim is to create by compulsion in the different provinces of the Empire a reservoir of trained men, and to rely upon that reservoir to supply by volunteering the Army you need for striking over sea. ("That is so.") That I understand. The whole object of your military policy is the power to strike beyond sea—the offensive power. Those who talk about compulsory service and at the same time say they by no means mean compulsory service for over sea, give away the whole show, because the essence of our military power and the use of our military force is to strike abroad. Supposing by the application of the compulsory principle you have created these immense reservoirs of military force and rely upon their units to provide, by volunteering, the elements of a great striking Army for use beyond the sea, is the lecturer quite sure—is anybody quite sure—that the very fact of adopting compulsion would not kill the spirit of volunteering for war service altogether? Are you sure when you have these reservoirs, and have done all this, when the pinch comes and to save the Empire it is necessary to put a great force beyond the sea, that

those reservoirs would supply that necessity by volunteering? My belief is that those reservoirs would fail. That is a serious question which I submit to the lecturer, and I hope we shall have some answer from him in connection with the matter.

Lieut.-Colonel O. T. DUKE (late 5 Bn. Rifle Brigade):—I think after the attacks which have been made upon the lecture, we shall all feel very much inclined to give our heartfelt thanks to the Council for having again brought forward this most important question of home defence, and for having selected so broad-minded and so able an exponent of it as the lecturer. I trust, however, that the information which has been made available by our lecturer will not be allowed to remain merely in an unfruitful state of theory. I trust that it will be pushed forward, and be energetically circulated throughout the country until, as Sir John Colomb has said, the people of this country have had an opportunity of forming their own opinion upon the suggestions which he has made. I think more especially that the Council is happy in the fact that it has chosen a civilian to read a paper at this particular moment on this subject, because I am convinced that the question of home defence as it stands at the present moment is one for the people of this country to take up as separate and distinct from military expert opinion. I cannot but think that those who have watched the discussions which have taken place in this theatre, who have read the many letters on the question of home defence which have appeared in the *Times* and in various papers during the last few years, must have come to the conclusion that there is gradually forming an opinion amongst the civil population which diverges from that of our military experts. Ever since the time of the Duke of Wellington the view has been held in this country, and more especially has it been proclaimed by the naval authorities, as we have just heard from Sir John Colomb, and also by our leading military authorities, that it is not possible to defend the shores of this country by a military force. In the year 1845 the Duke of Wellington had a correspondence with Sir Robert Peel. At that time there was a menace to the safety of this country. The National Debt was £800,000,000. The Duke of Wellington wrote to Sir Robert Peel that he did not consider it was possible to take any military measures to defend the shores of our country, that we must depend on the Navy, and failing the Navy our plight was a hopeless one. I think that has been more or less the opinion of military experts up to about the time of this South African war. They have held that if the Navy should break down and fail us, we should be reduced to a state of starvation, and that that state of starvation would compel a general surrender. They have held that no military forces that we might have would be of any value, because they could not be fed. That was the view, as I say, up to the time of the South African war, that failing our Navy we were done. But there has been going on during the last 30 years a development of civil opinion, as independent of military opinion. The first fruit of that civilian opinion was our Volunteer forces. Now, gentlemen, what is the state of military opinion at the present moment, and what is the state of civil opinion? I think you will find—I have found it myself in conversations which I have held with a great many distinguished officers—that they think still that, failing the Navy, we could make no fight, that if the Navy ceased to control the seas we could not defend our shores. Colonel Brookfield the other day said that at this crisis we wanted a word from our political leaders, and he deprecated more particularly the tone which he attributed to the Prime Minister. I do not think Colonel Brookfield has, perhaps, carefully read or considered what Lord Salisbury has said on these matters. I have here an extract from a speech which Lord Salisbury made in May, 1900, at the Albert Hall, in which he gave his views as to the necessity of every Briton learning to defend himself. Lord Salisbury said: "Of course we have the Navy, and I firmly believe that that defence would be sufficient; but

considering the prodigious, the enormous necessities which we have to safeguard, is it wise that all our eggs should be put into a single basket? Are we not bound to think of our national defence on land? The problem is that we cannot have resource to the remedy, to the protection for defence which every nation on the Continent has had occasion to set up and preserve, and to which its existence is now owing. Nothing in the nature of a conscription, that is to say, nothing of a nature which requires the population of this country to leave their homes for a certain number of years to learn the military art—that at present, as far as we can see, is not a remedy which the people of this country would accept.” Now, our lecturer does not propose that our young men should leave their homes for a number of years. All he proposes is a military training, and he is quite open, I imagine, to alter the term which he would suggest in accordance with the views of the British people. Lord Salisbury went on to say :—“ And what we have to look to—what we have to determine—is, how is the manhood of this country to be utilised for the preservation of the Empire? We have abundance of men. We can see in South Africa how they can fight. There are no troops equal to them in the world. But when the need comes, if ever the need should come, we must have them in sufficient numbers to make the enterprise of any enemy that should attack us absolutely hopeless. If when the danger comes it were possible for the Government of the day to call upon an armed people, upon a people of whom every grown-up man could handle his rifle, I do not think that after the experience we have had in South Africa, even the most apprehensive would have any cause to fear the result. But what we have to do is to induce the people to put themselves into a condition to defend the homes where they were bred and the country to which they are so deeply attached.” Now, gentlemen, I hold that here we have a civil opinion which is in direct opposition to the expert military opinion which has been predominant in this country during the last twenty years. We have a direct appeal to the people to arm themselves and place themselves in a position to defend their homes. If you look into the military mind you will find that it is mainly concerned with the efficiency of the forces which we have to maintain in our possessions beyond the sea, and which would form a contribution in the way of an army corps to be sent to help any ally we may be fighting in conjunction with in Europe. What military men are thinking of is the efficiency of the Standing Army for use abroad, and I think our lecturer, unless he can convince them that compulsory military education of the masses will produce such an alteration in their frame of mind as to lead them to voluntarily furnish for our service beyond the sea in sufficient numbers the class of recruits which they desire, men who will be willing to submit to the years of dreary, futile stagnation which constitute the soldier's life in peace-time beyond the seas after his first training is over; unless our lecturer can persuade the military experts that the movement he advocates will furnish them with the class of men they want, he will have great difficulty in getting them on his side. I believe that the military education he advocates would produce that result, and that Sir John Colomb is in error in thinking that, because men know how to fight, they would hold back and refuse to fight. I hope that our lecturer will push on and develop his views until the reproach has been removed from this nation that, if we had to speak with an enemy in the gate, scarcely one in eighteen of the manhood of this country would be in a position to come forward and take their place in any organisation for our defence. That is a very serious condition of things. This fact is double-edged, because not only would they be unable to defend themselves, but the necessity of feeding this large portion of non-combatants would be a millstone around the necks of those who would be able to defend themselves. If our lecturer intends to push his views, I believe they can only be given effect to by the patriotic combination of disinterested men, who will develop some sort

of association which shall formulate this plan of his into a Bill which could be brought before Parliament. If the outcome of this paper should be such a course, and if such a course should be successful, he will have earned the gratitude of the country, not only on military but on social grounds, for I feel confident he has not underestimated the benefits of the commercial, moral, intellectual, and physical improvements which would follow from the compulsory military education of the martial races which form the British people

Colonel R. PILKINGTON, M.P. (2nd V.B. Prince of Wales's Volunteers (South Lancashire Regiment)) :—In listening to the criticisms which have been offered on the very able lecture, I thought that the best way was to bring the question of the South African War to the test. If you look at the number of troops that are now in South Africa, you will see that there are 141,000 Regulars, 19,000 Militia, 13,000 Imperial Yeomanry, 5,000 Volunteers, and 57,000 Colonials. In directing your attention to that, I want to say what must have struck everyone at the beginning of the war and during the whole course of the war, namely, that we have not had sufficient available trained military men to send out. We have had to scrape them from all corners of the Empire, and in my opinion to a far greater extent the war in South Africa ought to have been conducted by men who could have been called upon at any moment from any part of the Empire as trained men to go to South Africa; whereas we have had to send a great many semi-trained men and a great many who were not trained at all. Although many of the men could ride and shoot to begin with, they were not trained soldiers which were sent from the Colonies, and we know that from the United Kingdom that was the case in a greater degree. Therefore, I come to the point, that we do want a very much larger reserve of trained men ready either in the United Kingdom or in the Colonies, and the question is, How are we to get it? It appears to me that we should get it if this scheme, or a modified form of the scheme, was carried out. Sir Howard Vincent challenged you, Sir, to produce a Member of Parliament who would say that he thought some form of compulsory service would be a very good thing, and to say it in the House of Commons. Well, Sir, I have said that in the House of Commons. I may say that the idea I put most distinctly to the House was that the Volunteers could resign at any moment—at any rate they can in my battalion, a battalion of 1,000 strong. They do not, of course, resign, but they might resign. I suggested that it would be no hardship at all for every man between the age of 18 and 23 to go through the same kind of training that the Volunteers have to go through. Then I met a point brought up by Sir Howard Vincent. He said that so many men every year left the Volunteers. But what becomes of them? You cannot lay your hands on them. They are gone. I met that point also in my remarks in the House, that after they had served for 5 years, between 18 and 23, in the Service, exactly as I served myself, and in which 250,000 Volunteers serve to-day, they should go into the Reserve for 5 years. Their names should be taken down at the Volunteer headquarters, and they might turn up once a year, or something like that, just to report themselves. They should be put into classes up to the age of 50. That at any rate is a much milder form than the proposition of the lecturer, but it is a proposition that covers every man fit for war service throughout the United Kingdom. I feel certain that if it were suggested to the Colonies, a universal service something of that character would very soon grow up. Several speakers have suggested that the country should be educated up to this. In the present system we have a Regular Army, a Militia, an Imperial Yeomanry, and Volunteers. The Volunteers have rifles in their hands. I suppose the batteries of

Volunteer Artillery have some kind of guns in their hands, but they are absolutely unorganised, in masses, in divisions, and all that sort of thing. The aim of the lecturer is to have some universal system of trained men, and my suggestion supplies it. In getting up and speaking as I have done to-day, not only as a colonel of a Volunteer regiment, but as a business man, I may say I believe some kind of system could be worked out, and that is the reason why I welcome the new Volunteer Orders. If we cannot get a system like the lecturer's, let us evolve some middle system which will still cover every white man who is able to bear arms throughout the Empire. In the main it must be seen that such a system does not exist, because if you compare even the 800,000 of Sir Howard Vincent with the 4,000,000 of trained men in France, or the 4,000,000 of trained men in Germany, or the 8,000,000 in Russia, what hope have we, seeing that we could not get through the war in South Africa without the trouble of gathering these men together and training them? If we had to face a European nation, where should we find the fighting men to supply the Army in the field outside the United Kingdom?

Colonel Viscount HARDINGE (7th Bn. Rifle Brigade):—I think we are all greatly indebted to our noble Chairman for having introduced this subject, which no doubt is of momentous importance at the present time, and to Mr. Shee for having given us this most interesting lecture. The subject has been more fully set forth in his book "*The Briton's First Duty*," of which I am glad to see Lord Newton, in a very patriotic spirit, has published more or less at his own expense, a cheap edition, so that the public may be able to read it in the proper spirit. I am afraid I must differ from a great many other speakers who have spoken before me, because I thoroughly agree with nearly all Mr. Shee's propositions. I think that his arguments in favour of universal service in lieu of our present voluntary service leave nothing to be desired. Last week we were told by a gentleman who followed Mr. Shee that he thought that voluntary service was a very good thing, because Count Sternberg had said from what he had seen in South Africa that voluntary was far superior to compulsory service. Well, gentlemen, I do not see what Count Sternberg has to do with it. I did not know that Count Sternberg was a great Continental authority. If, on the other hand, we had been told by all the military *attachés* of the other nations of the Continent, men who went out to South Africa, that their conclusions on seeing our Army were that voluntary service was far superior, then I think there would have been some weight in it; but I do not think for one moment that the Germans, the French, or the Russians would have thought so. I prefer the word "universal" service to the word "compulsory," because I think if Mr. Shee's book is to be read by the public, to be valued, and to have great weight with the public, that word should be eliminated from the book. We as a nation, no doubt, are very insular in our opinions with regard to our Army, and I think that if any Government were to introduce to the public schemes with Continental names, such as conscription or compulsory service, they would be tabooed at once. I most thoroughly concur with all the lecturer's propositions, but there are one or two things I do not feel quite clear upon. First, if we had such a large number of men for universal military service for home defence, how does he propose to find the men for foreign service and for active service when required? Secondly, if by his scheme this large number of men were procured for universal service for one year, which I presume is to be done by one year's continuous service, and not to be extended for 3 or 4 years, how would those men be housed? At the present moment I believe the barrack accommodation only suffices for our present small Army, and therefore something needs to be said with regard to that

I think it is undoubtedly true that when this South African war comes to a satisfactory conclusion we shall lose a very large number of men both in the Militia and in the Army, and the question is, How are those great gaps to be filled up? I quite agree with Mr. Dawkins who, when he referred to that admirable scheme of Mr. Brodrick's, the army corps, said he did not think that the men should be procured for this army corps after the war was completed. I agree with that proposition, because I think if he (Mr. Brodrick) was to wait till the end of the war he would never get the men for these army corps. The question is, How are these men to be procured? In my opinion we have more or less got to our last resources, as we have come down now to the dregs of the military population. As Lord Wemyss very truly asked, How have a great many of those men been procured? They have been procured more or less, as he said, by bribery, by paying them 5s., while we are paying our soldiers 1s. Well, gentlemen, if by voluntary service we are in the future to get the right class of men, which they tell us in modern warfare it is most important we should get, it seems to me that the only way to get them would be by paying them 5s. If, as our lecturer has said with perfect truth, every man in the English Army costs roughly £120 per annum, and that is giving him 1s., we should find if we had to give him 5s. that he was a very expensive article. I cannot help thinking, bearing all this in mind, that what Colonel Lonsdale Hale said in his introduction to Mr. Shee's book is true. Those who know Colonel Lonsdale Hale have a great opinion of him as a military critic, and he hit the right nail on the head when he said that it is for the nation to determine this question of universal service and to force the Government, if necessary, to initiate such measures as will suffice for the purpose. What ought to be done should be done at once. The moment for national action is now. Hereafter will be too late. Before sitting down I should like to ask the Chairman to give us later his ideas as to how he proposes to further these good ends, and to let the public be brought face to face with this point of universal service. I feel sure we are all greatly indebted to him for the way in which he has already initiated it by publishing for the public a cheap edition of Mr. Shee's book.

Colonel W. T. DOONER, *p.s.c.* (A.A.G., Thames District):—The applause with which the lecture was received and the frequent marks of approbation during its reading evidently show that there are very few friends of the voluntary system in this theatre. I, however, in the few moments allotted to me, am very desirous of saying a few words in favour of that system, as I fear that the civilian mind, the man in the street, the ordinary voter, to whom the Bishop of Chester has referred, is not yet sufficiently prepared or ready for any form of compulsory service; and able as the lecture undoubtedly is, the subject, I think, has not yet entered on the stage when any Government will propose it for adoption to the House of Commons. I do not know whether the lecturer is aware that, about two years ago, the late Secretary of State for War only hinted in the House of Lords that it might be necessary to put the ballot for the Militia in force, and as a result, it was stated that information was received from all the various Parliamentary districts that such a proposition would be very unpopular and possibly very dangerous indeed to the Government which proposed it, and we never, I think, heard a word more about the subject.

The CHAIRMAN:—We shall though; we very soon shall.

Colonel W. T. DOONER:—Perhaps so; but my point is that, if the present Government, with a majority of 150 in the House of Commons, decided that it would not be wise to enforce even the ballot for the Militia, it is unlikely, I venture to think, that

any Government will be found for many years to come, which will propose to the country any form of compulsory service. I will now, as briefly as possible, refer to the different advantages which the lecturer claims would be secured if his proposals were adopted. The first, a strong Navy, I must leave to be dealt with by naval officers. The second advantage claimed is, that we shall have a long-service Army abroad. I am not quite clear what is meant when Mr. Shee speaks of a long-service Army; but presume it is intended that men are to enlist for twelve years, and be shipped off to India and our Colonies for about that period. I beg, however, to assure my hearers, that, in my opinion, you will not get men in the present day to enlist for twelve years without a large increase of pay. It is, I think, one of the drawbacks of our present system to make men bind themselves for even seven years' colour service; and if this period could be decreased to three years—it would be of great benefit to the Army. Men will not enlist for twelve years to serve in India or the West Indies, or some indifferent climate for possibly the whole of that time; and that is what I presume a long-service Army means. Then you tell us, thirdly, that we are to get an immense reserve—a Pan-Britannic Militia, as it is called—and this immense reserve is to be available to reinforce, when required, as I gather from the paper, the long-service Army in case of war. (Hear, hear.) This gentleman says “hear, hear,” and therefore, I presume, his interpretation of the lecturer's propositions agrees with mine. The Pan-Britannic Militia is to reinforce the long-service Army in time of war. But I ask you, Would that be compulsory service for home defence, that men are to be in a Militia and to be suddenly drafted abroad into the long-service Army, to reinforce it in time of war? That would appear to me to be unjust to the men so drafted, and it would not be compulsory service for home defence at all. It would be compulsory service for the Empire. Let us take the last twenty-five years, and the different small wars we have been engaged in. When any of our out-posts, as I may call them, Afghanistan, South Africa, Zululand, Egypt or elsewhere, have been attacked, what would have happened if the lecturer's proposals had been in force? The Voluntary Army at any of those places would have been reinforced from the reserve at home until the difficulty was over; but that could not have been compulsory service for home defence, but for the Empire. I now come to another difficulty, a thorny and a somewhat delicate one, and not easy to deal with. I refer to Ireland, and I ask you, Would anyone in this room propose that these propositions should apply to Ireland? Is it intended that, after the experience of the late Galway election, when a candidate, who dare not appear, fearing arrest, as he had fought on the side of the Boers—but who, nevertheless, was elected by an enormous majority, over a supporter of the Government—is it proposed that every man in Ireland, between 18 and 23, should be trained to be a soldier? (“Yes.”) Then all I can say is that, if this proposal were carried out, Ireland would not be the most comfortable place in the world to live in. What did Lord Salisbury give as his opinion two years ago, when this South African war broke out? He said that he congratulated the people of England that the predominant partner had not granted Home Rule to Ireland. I therefore venture to think that the Prime Minister does not agree with those gentlemen who say “Yes! Yes!” I now pass on to a statement by the lecturer that, had his proposals been in force in 1899, 100,000 men could have been sent to South Africa with the same ease that we sent 10,000. I venture to assure all in this theatre that here is a great error. (“Why?”) I will show you. The 100,000 men were ready, and only waiting for the order to mobilise; and was it not stated in the House of Lords this time last year that it was for political reasons the army corps was not at once mobilised and sent to South Africa? The Cabinet very rightly held on, as many others did, to the

hope that Mr. Kruger and the Boers would not invade our territory and go to war ; and the Government, being averse to doing anything which could be interpreted as preparing for war, would not mobilise even one army corps. Was not that stated, and is it not a fact ? All was ready, and when the order was given there was no delay ; and then when the dark days of December, 1899, came was not division after division mobilised as soon as the order was issued ? Every division was got ready and embarked as soon as the ships were ready to receive them. It was a matter of the ships being ready if any delay occurred, and therefore the lecturer's statement is quite inaccurate. In making as good a case as possible for compulsory service for home defence, I think it was unnecessary to make some of the remarks that Mr. Shee has made depreciating and disparaging the men who join the Army under the voluntary system. The lecturer says they are the poorest of the poor, that they choose between the Poor House and the Army, and that the less said about the gloriousness of the voluntary system the better. Mr. Shee also mentions the failures in civil life who enlist. Well, I have been a recruiting officer for five years, and I was sitting beside another officer who was here on Friday last when those statements were read out. He said he had enlisted some 70,000 men in four years, and that these statements were most inaccurate. The failures in civil life are very often successful in the Army, and of course we know that would-be recruits are sometimes hungry, and when they see or hear of the men in barracks getting good dinners they may be influenced, and come in and enlist. But these are the exceptions. These statements, although they do not assist recruiting, are nevertheless complimentary to the British nation. If the poorest of the poor are the men that join the Army, did not Earl Roberts tell us that in South Africa they fought like heroes and behaved like gentlemen ? If then the poorest of the poor fight in this way, ought we not to be proud of our countrymen ? All that the lecturer has mentioned about the press-gang, and men being forced into the Army in former times, is ancient history, and has little bearing on this subject of compulsory service for home defence. Many advantages are claimed if the lecturer's proposals are adopted. It is said there will be drilling in schools. Well, drilling goes on in schools now. We do not want compulsory service to get this advantage. We all agree that we do not want the boys in the schools to be a race of tadpoles, all head and no body. The muddy stream of alien immigration is also mentioned, but the Government could stop that to-morrow, if the country so desired. Compulsory service would not affect it. In his reply Mr. Shee would perhaps explain how he makes out that our voluntary Army costs £123 per man per annum. Does he include the Army Reserve or the Militia or the Volunteers ? When we consider all that the Militia and Volunteers have done during the last two and a half years to help us in South Africa they may, I think, be well included in his calculation. It is not fair to calmly take a sum like £30,000,000 and divide it by the number of Regular soldiers we have ; also £30,000,000 is not a fair sum to take as the normal Army Estimates ; hitherto they have not had as much as that, but they may reach it hereafter. Of course all will agree that a compulsory Army would be cheaper than a voluntary one, but not so much cheaper as some people think. As one speaker said just now, Where are the barracks to come from ? (" Build them.") Well, gentlemen, that costs money. To build barracks will cost an enormous sum, and must be added to Mr. Shee's calculations.¹ The lecturer

¹ I had intended here to have referred to the authorities having recently reduced the standard height for recruits, but was unable to do so, owing to my having exceeded the time limit. Many of the speakers who touched on this point caused

refers to Professor Seely's statement that we have colonised half the world in a fit of absence of mind, and adds that the tonic now required is compulsory service for home defence. I am hardly, however, of opinion that you will get the British voter to agree with you. The tonic required, I venture to think, is that some man will arise who will insist that the men of our Army shall be better paid, and that the 600,000 or 700,000 men we already possess shall be put on a proper footing. What is necessary is that our Militia and Volunteers should be organised on some sound principles, and with some regard to the proper proportion of the three arms. Their efficiency is the first consideration, and that is mainly a financial question; and if England cannot get over a financial difficulty, I do not know what country can. It is ludicrous, for instance, to suppose that Volunteers can give up their time to the service of their country, and go into camps for training, and then be out of pocket by the transaction. The mass of men we have already got must be allotted in the proper proportion to brigades, divisions, and army corps, before we need consider the necessity of having 2,000,000 men ready. The man who will settle these matters to the satisfaction of the country has, I think, appeared. The war and able papers like the one Mr. Shee has read to us will help him in his task, but I imagine you will find that our Army will remain under the voluntary system.

The CHAIRMAN :—I think I must take the opinion of the meeting as to what we are to do. I understand there are several gentlemen who wish to speak, and the lecturer has a right of reply, and if these various rights are going to be exercised it will prolong the meeting. Is it the wish of the meeting that the discussion should be adjourned?

Colonel T. H. BAYLIS, K.C. (late 18th Middlesex V.R.) :—It is a most interesting discussion, and I hope it will be adjourned. I shall be happy to propose the adjournment.

The meeting was then again adjourned to Thursday, 27th February.

27th February.—The discussion was again resumed with Major Lord NEWTON in the Chair.

Admiral the Hon. Sir E. R. FREMANTLE, G.C.B., C.M.G. (Rear-Admiral of the United Kingdom) :—I think that what I had to say, or a portion of it, has been said by my friends Sir N. Bowden-Smith and Sir John Colomb, and, therefore, I need not detain you the regulation ten minutes. I should like to

some amusement because the height had been reduced to 5 feet; but, if the system adopted by our Continental neighbours is investigated, it will be found that men abroad are accepted of the same or a less height than 5 feet. In France the minimum works out to 1 foot 11 inches, while in Germany it is exactly 5 feet. Are not all aware also that if the rule as to height for officers had existed 50 years ago the same as for the men, the Army would have lost one, if not two, of our most distinguished general officers? I know not if they would have been accepted as "specials." I may add that in March last year I made the suggestion that this height standard should be reduced, as small men are to be preferred, I venture to think, for mounted duties, and many of the Colonials who have fought in South Africa for us, I am informed, have been under 5 feet in height.—W. T. D.

explain my position, and, I think, the position of a great many naval men, with regard to this question of conscription. I confess that I have been rather prejudiced against it. It is often used as if it were a panacea for all evils. It is thought by people who really do not "think" that, if we have a very large force under arms, all would go well. From this point of view I do not quite like the wording of this lecture. Mr. Shee calls it "compulsory service for home defence," but I should like it better if it were called "compulsory service a national duty." So far as I have read and studied the lecture, that, I understand, is the point which Mr. Shee wishes principally to put before us. We are accustomed in this Institution of naval and military men to suppose that everybody acknowledges the national duty of personal service. I am afraid that is not as general as we could wish. I heard, not long ago, a friend of my own say with reference to his son: "I am not going to send him to South Africa to be made a target of." Perhaps that was a natural sentiment, but it is scarcely a patriotic one, or one that appeals to us here. The prevalence of that sort of feeling has no doubt induced Mr. Shee to bring this question forward. I should like now to speak on the general principle. I am entirely in favour of acknowledging the duty to the country of personal sacrifice. I think that we want in this country, in every respect, drill and discipline. It is complained of very often that young people, whether in board schools or other places, are not taught discipline, are not taught respect for their superiors, are not taught the meaning of acting together. They have a sort of spurious idea of independence. Hence, I think, to a certain extent, the hooliganism which has been recently so rampant. Therefore, on those grounds alone and on the grounds of general personal service to our country, I should certainly speak in favour of this lecture. I understand that the lecturer wishes mainly to improve the moral tone and national physique, and in those respects I am really under the impression that something of the nature of personal service would be an advantage. But I think I would venture to remind him that even there, there are two sides to the question. He must know that there is a large party in France which accuses compulsory service—the *vie de caserne*, as they call it—of being extremely demoralising to the nation; but I think, if I understand the lecturer aright, that he is endeavouring to avoid that difficulty and trying not to have anything like a large number of people in barracks, what I may call eating their heads off. I have spoken of discipline, and I am very glad to see the lecturer referred to the false sentimentality which leads people to object to reasonable punishment. I think when we commit faults we ought to be punished, and it seems to me an unhealthy state of things that we cannot stand being told of our faults, and that young people are not to incur reasonable and proper punishment. If this compulsory service will do what I hope it will do, it would improve the nation as a whole, and, as Captain Mahan says, "the artist is greater than his tools, the warrior than his weapons." That is the old story, but in more commonplace terms, that the man behind the gun is more important than the gun itself. So far, then, I go distinctly with the lecturer; I am glad to say he has handsomely acknowledged how necessary it is to have a good Navy. Really, I am afraid a great many military men—and we see it very often in those who have just awoke to the sense of their responsibilities—have an idea that if we had a nation under arms all would go well. I dare say a great many of you have read a letter by Mr. Samuel Smith which appeared in the *Times* a few days ago, in which he talked about a large and expensive Navy, and about Nelson being decoyed to the West Indies. I will not go into that now, but the idea in his mind evidently was, that whereas we ought to make some national effort to keep on equal terms with the Continental nations, it would be sufficient if we copied their

methods and did not care quite so much about the Navy or our communications, or about our Empire. I doubt if he thought about the Empire at all. He was thinking of this war and of invasion. Essentially that is not the right way to look at it, and when people look at it in that sort of way I feel inclined to say that they do not understand the question, and that what they propose is of no value to us, speaking from a purely military point of view. When I say it is of no value, I believe it to be of the greatest value from the national point of view, but not much from a military point of view. There are one or two weaknesses in our national armour which I think it is well to mention in this category. From a recent return our commerce represents 10,000,000 tons, and the French commerce represents just over 1,000,000, the German commerce representing less than 2,000,000. That will give you some idea, without going into the question of food supply, which we discussed in this theatre not long ago, as to the dependence of this country on its over-sea trade. Most of the criticisms have been referred to before. There was some little mistake about the "Good Hope," and a mistake not mentioned before in the lecturer referring to the peace complement in the Navy. I am happy to say we have no peace complements. We used to have some peace complements in the coast-guard ships, but now they are always kept with their crews complete, and as regards any other ship it is an error to suppose that we have any ships in commission short of their official complements. Foreign papers frequently say that our ships are not fully manned. I saw it mentioned in 1897, when we had that fine array at Spithead, that our ships were only partially manned; but I can assure you that they were very completely manned, and very completely fitted in every respect. I do not deny that there may have been a little shortage in the engineering branch. In this branch we had to have a lower rating in some cases instead of a higher rating. We have very much increased our steam Navy, and the horse-power in individual ships, and the engineering difficulty is one from which other nations suffer at least as much as we do. I do not wish to criticise the finance, but it appears to me that the lecturer passed that over rather lightly. I do not know what effect a large compulsory force in this country would have upon the recruiting. Would it be good or would it be bad? I do not know that anybody could give a sound opinion upon the matter, which must be proved by results. Volunteers, generally speaking, seem to be rather against compulsion, and the impression appears to be that they would not get Volunteers if there was compulsion, and that the two could not go together. I dare say the lecturer has looked into that question rather more closely than I have, and perhaps will make some remarks upon it when he speaks again. We all know that we require a very large number of recruits both for India and the Colonies. I have always thought that we want really a short-service Army and a long-service Army. That has been my theory, and it does not seem to me that we have hit off exactly the right thing hitherto. Possibly by some such plan as the lecturer's we might do something, but I am glad the lecturer has not avoided the question of our large demands for India and the Colonies, and has looked fairly and squarely in the face the fact that no conscripts ever do go abroad in peace-time or even in war-time. I believe the Italians sent their conscripts to Abyssinia, and I was told that the peasants put obstacles on the railway and tried to upset the trains taking down the troops; and we know the result of the battle of Adowa. I am in warm agreement with the general principle of the lecturer, and I can only hope that what is said in this Institution will permeate through the country generally, and possibly get as far as the Legislature and our Ministers, and become a question of practical politics.

Major-General T. BLAND STRANGE (late R.A.) :— I do not propose to take up your time by repeating anything that the lecturer has said so much better than I can say it. His famous book, "The Briton's First Duty," has been published for 6d., but unfortunately there are too many Britons who do not consider a knowledge of their first duty is worth 6d. We are constantly met by the conscientious objector ; we all know what he is. He does not bring us facts : he is full of what Shakespeare calls "damnable iteration." Parrot-like, he repeats phrases over and over again, of which he does not know the meaning. Unfortunately, for a quarter of a century, we have been governed by phrases, advised on Imperial defence by phrases. It is not so very long ago since the Prime Minister told us that in consideration of our relative position with Russia and India we ought to study large maps. Now, there are but 50 miles between our outposts. There are other favourite phrases that are continually reiterated, and I trust that my brethren of the "True Blue" will forgive me if I think it is a national necessity to point out the exaggerations that lie in the opinions of the extreme Naval Schools. We are always told about the command of the sea as a reason for inadequate land forces. It is dreadful, perhaps, for a soldier to say anything about the command of the sea ; but is there such a thing as absolute command of the sea ? It is not a question for admirals¹ or generals : it is a question for the people of this country, and especially for the young people of this country. For the men of my generation our day of service is past. But are there many people in this room who seriously think that the day is far off when Holland will become part of Germany ? If that happens, will not Belgium go to France ? If so, you will have a hostile coast from the Baltic to the Bay of Biscay. Look at the maps and mark the tortuous channels about these islands at the mouths of the Maas, the Scheldt, etc. Why did we spill our blood for a century and rack our armies with fever till they "swore terribly in Flanders"² if it were not to hold all those little inlets that would cover any number of transport fleets to invade England ? A number of penny Thames steamers would suffice in these days. It is three hours' steam across. I ask our gallant admirals honestly, do they propose to blockade the coast of Europe ? Nelson could blockade Toulon for two years, and even then Napoleon gave him the slip with 30,000 men ; but nowadays we must coal. I will not say a word about submarines, about which everybody except admirals are thinking. But would it be possible to blockade the coast of Europe in the presence of the ever-increasing ordinary torpedo-boat, of which France alone possesses more than ourselves ? We know the enormous task our Navy has to perform all over the seas—those seven seas, where Kipling says our "Empire flag is unfurled." Just think and try to calculate what mark the greatest number of ships you could obtain would make upon the enormous area of those seas ? I know that the Navy is our first line of defence. All I say is, for goodness' sake do not rest the Empire on a one-legged stool. We require three legs to our stool. The most important leg, we all know, is the Navy. But do not say that we want no National Army for home defence because our Navy has to be everywhere. There is our food supply to be considered, as the gallant admiral has just said. But let me remind him the strongest Navy in the world cannot force our enemy to sell us food, though it can bring it to us from our own Colonies. As the Navy must be free, we ought not to leave the heart of the Empire bare ; and, there-

¹ In spite of the theories of an American naval captain (Mahan) drawn from events of more than 100 years ago before steam and torpedoes.—T. B. S.

² According to my Uncle Toby.—T. B. S.

fore, we require a national home defence army as well as one for foreign garrisons. What I think was a very tangible objection was raised by Sir Howard Vincent, who asked what was going to be done with this mass of men in peace-time. We all admit that we are going to make them good citizens as well as good soldiers. If we had manhood service we should not have any pro-Boers. The gallant admiral says rightly, do not put these men into barracks. We do not want to. Half a loaf is better than no bread. You can make a soldier in a much shorter time than a year. I have been engaged in making Canadian soldiers of a most difficult arm in six months, and even in three months. Have these men answered in South Africa? Are there many who will say that the short-service Canadian is not a good one? If you must be content with six months instead of a year, there is no necessity to have the men in barracks. You can put them in camps, and thus do away with many of the objections that are being made. You can do it gradually; you need not take everything at one bite. If you take away the countrymen during the six summer months, the farmers would have something to say on the matter; as we hope to get the countryman back to the country by putting a tax on foreign flour, it would not be wise to take him away at harvest-time. Then why not send the townsmen into camp in the country in the summer; and when the farmer's boy has nothing to do and his master wants to get rid of him in winter, send him into barracks in the town. It would liven him up and do him good. I will not go into the question of what I believe would be the advantages of manhood service. We have been told that we only require "a little British Army to go a 'D' long way," and the extreme Naval School think we want but little else than a small Army for them to carry about. Where are you going to land them? Are we going to land 300,000 men on the coast of Germany or Russia or France, each 100,000 to be met by 1,000,000? Are we going to take away Madagascar, or something of that kind? To tread on our enemies' toes when you expose your own heart is the height of folly, in my opinion; and, therefore we all get back to the fact that we require a three-legged stool, that is to say, the strongest Navy we can possibly afford, manned, if it must be, by compulsion—if there are such things as shirkers they must not be allowed to shirk. Secondly, a long-service foreign service voluntary Army which the Navy can take about when necessary, say for the defence of the long frontier of Canada; and when they go away and the Navy goes away, a short-service compulsory Army for home defence, which will make England a place that no enemy dare set his foot upon. Our present method of military defence or offensive reminds me of the Italian charm against an evil eye—two fingers extended. Take one, the forefinger, and consider it as Tommy Atkins, and think where he comes from and what a splendid fellow he is, notwithstanding. The other, the little finger, is his officer. The fingers in between are the British people, and they have never been forced to do anything for their country. Let England clench her fist with all classes of the people, and other nations not only dare not abuse her but dare not look askance at her. The people who want compulsion most are our rulers. Alas! They are too old to learn. This scheme will make it compulsory on their sons to learn something useful to themselves and the nation. There is now no compulsion on the son of wealthy parents when he goes to a public school to learn anything except games and good form—excellent things in their way, but you want more. The scheme of Mr. Shee will put it to every youth that if he does not pass a certain standard of literary examination he must go as a conscript, or a full private in the Militia. In that way we should educate the future rulers of this country. Thank God, a few of them do not require education as to their duty, among them our Chairman, Lord Newton.

Major F. E. B. SEELY, D.S.O., M.P. (Hants Carabiniers Imperial Yeomanry):—My excuse for intervening in this discussion must be that I have had a very special reason for seeing the result of our present military system. When I tell you that I have found myself in command, in face of an enemy, of men who, with every other good military quality, could not shoot, and did not pretend to be able to shoot, I think you will admit that we have proof, which no one can gainsay, that it behoves us at once to put our shoulder to the wheel. I have said elsewhere that these particular men were a much-maligned force which possessed almost every military virtue other than a knowledge of the rifle. Those I saw—and they were many—were excellent men and anxious to do their duty to the fullest extent of their power, if necessary to the sacrifice of their lives. But, as you are well aware, and the fact is not disputed, many of them could not shoot, for the simple reason that they had not had the opportunity of learning to do so, and they had never realised that as Englishmen it was one of their first duties. Nobody can say that those men who could not shoot would have been sent to fight for their country if men who could shoot had been available. No one can gainsay that if, after a year and a half of war against the smallest white people in the world which it is conceivable we should ever engage, we came to the end of our trained men, that a grave state of things exists. I cannot but congratulate this distinguished assembly therefore on having met together to discuss in a determined spirit some way of altering that state of things. Even the one consideration I have brought forward amounts to a proof that something is wrong, and gravely wrong. This war has taught us that it may not rest with this country whether we should go to war or not—the other country may go to war with us. And as that other country which goes to war with us, whatever it be, will be more numerous than our present enemy, we may reasonably assume that we shall then come to the end of our trained men not in a year and a half, but in months or even weeks. I know there are people who say it is unwise to make these statements publicly, because it will give an impression of weakness to our friends abroad. But everyone must surely know that they are more aware of these facts than we are in this country. In fact, I am glad to think that they greatly exaggerate our military weakness. If it is agreed, as I believe it is, by everyone in this room that the danger is imminent and great, we may come to the question of the remedy. I myself, speaking as a Member of Parliament, with a seat to lose, say openly that I consider it would be extremely desirable that it should be obligatory for every male in this country to be trained to arms. I also believe that five-sixths of the people of this country would welcome such a proposition. But it is as well to remember that we must consider not only what is just and wise and urgent, but also what is possible, and I would strongly urge that we shall make a very great mistake, we enthusiasts who wish to see this thing done, if we make any proposition amounting to a suggestion that the male population of this country should go into barracks for a year or two years—I would go further and say, should go into barracks at all. There is a particular reason for this. The man in the street, who after all is the absolute arbiter in this matter, has observed that in South Africa men such as the New Zealanders and the Imperial Light Horse, to take only two instances, have acquitted themselves with a gallantry and military skill, both in attack and defence, which have been the admiration of the whole Army. He also knows that these men had not served in barracks, and can therefore see that it is not an essential part of the soldier's training that he should be trained for a year or two years in barracks; consequently, if you ask him to submit to that I think he will refuse, and then we shall come to a deadlock, because he cannot be made to serve. There is another consideration which I have not often seen referred to. The most thoughtful people on the Continent who study military matters

are of the same opinion ; they would say that the reason why some Continental Powers have a two years' and a three years' service is, not that they consider it essential that a man should be trained for two or three years in order to become an efficient fighting man, but because it is essential that they should have a large force, 500,000 men in some cases permanently under arms, ready to move at the shortest notice. Other Powers, such as Sweden and Switzerland, who do not find the same urgent reason for keeping their frontiers in a like state of readiness to repel attack, train their men for a much shorter time : and yet, in the opinion of the best experts, their men, though perhaps not quite so efficient as the two years' men, are almost as efficient. The Swedish system, which I will commend to your consideration, has, broadly speaking, produced a force of 500,000 trained men from a population of 5,000,000. These are rough figures, but I have verified them from intelligence reports and other sources. As far as I can ascertain, it costs something under £1,000,000 a year. So that in this country, on the same system, with very large exemption for those physically unfit, you might have a force available of 3,000,000 men at a cost of £6,000,000 annually, or little more than we spend each month in the present war. If a force such as that would put us in an immeasurably stronger position ; if it would make invasion wholly impossible—now certainly a possibility, in the view of our enemies—surely it would be worth while to create it, and I am certain you could convert the people to that view. The training, in the case of the Swedish Army, is sixty-eight days in the first year and twenty-two days in the second ; engineers and artillerymen are trained for a longer period, and, of course, are paid accordingly. I will not detain this meeting longer, except to say that I am strongly in favour of this matter being put before the public quite frankly. Our countrymen should be told that the danger is imminent ; that it can be easily overcome by their own personal exertions, and that in no other way can it be overcome. Not by spending money on ships, although the Navy must always have our first care ; not, most assuredly, by shouting about Imperial greatness, but by personal self-sacrifice alone can this Empire be maintained. I go further : I believe that if all these warnings fall upon deaf ears, at no distant date this Empire, of which we are so proud, will fall to pieces, and that this nation will be humbled to the dust.

Lieut.-Colonel W. C. UNDERWOOD (late 4th Hussars) :—After the magnificent speech we have just heard, I really think there is little more to be said on the points Major Seely has referred to. I believe we shall all agree that Mr. Shee's lecture is one of the most important military contributions we have had in this theatre for many years. There is one subject he only touched upon lightly, and that was the question of how universal service served nations which adopted it in the past. He mentions that during the decadence of the Roman and Greek Empires they gave up universal service and went in for mercenary Armies. They lost their Empires thereby. But in the zenith of the military power of Rome she had a desperate campaign against a country which had a mercenary Army, with a number of foreign legions, namely, Carthage. You all know what the upshot of that campaign was. At first the Carthaginians with a superior Navy like England, and with superior wealth and commerce, beat the Romans, but in the end the citizen Army of Rome outstayed the mercenaries of Carthage and at last succeeded in destroying the Carthaginian Armies. When we come to a later period we have the 1870-71 campaign between the French and Germans. There the Germans had the system of universal military citizen service. Every man had to be a soldier. But the French, on the other hand, had a long-service Army, with a sort of Militia Ballot, of which, I am sorry to say, some of us are in favour. I am not. They had a

Militia Ballot in which a large number of exemptions were allowed by payment, and the middle classes largely got out of their service. What was the consequence? The superior organisation caused by the universal service of Germany gave the victory to the Germans over the French. In July last there appeared in the JOURNAL of this Institution a translation from the Military Year Book of Germany, entitled "The History of the South African War," and in that translation it states that the British system of Army organisation is obsolete, and has not altered since the end of the eighteenth century, and that this is owing in a great measure to the system of voluntary enlistment. It cannot be too often reiterated that the great advantage of universal service in this country would be that it would substitute for the present cumbrous system of Regulars, Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers, over-lapping as they do, one uniform Army, and efficiency and economy would take the place of the present unwieldy state of things which have come down to us from the past. Recently, Mr. Spencer Churchill wrote a letter in the *Daily Mail*, in which he stated that he "never ceased to rub it into his constituents that unless we kept up a sufficient Volunteer force we should require to resort to the blood tax of conscription." Assuming for a moment that it is a blood tax, the man in the street referred to by Major Seely very often says: "Well, it is possible your argument may be right, and that the voluntary system of enlistment has broken down, and I fancy we shall have eventually to go in for compulsory military service, and when the time comes we can do so." It seems to me that this is something like the argument of a man, living in a small-pox neighbourhood, who says that eventually he will have to be vaccinated; but before that takes place he gets small-pox and dies. I think it is better for us if we see that the voluntary system has broken down, not to delay until it is too late, but to go in for the only alternative at once. Colonel Brookfield very rightly remarked that politicians, leaders of public opinion, Members of Parliament, and others have for a very long time vacillated and fumbled over this question. They are afraid of their seats. As long as that is the case, we cannot get this matter put fairly before the British public. My belief is that the workmen of England, if it were put before them in the eloquent manner which Major Seely has put it before us to-day, would vote for it. They are patriotic. They man the Volunteers in the most patriotic way. The people who might object, and would most possibly object, would not be that class, but those small employers of labour and others who would be afraid of a rise in wages. About 25 years ago a paper called the *London Figaro* devoted itself entirely to objecting to compulsory education. The arguments in that paper against compulsory education were exactly on all fours with the arguments we have against compulsory service to-day. It said it was interfering with the liberty of the subject. The same people who objected then are the same people who object now, that is to say, those who were at that time in favour of the voluntary schools, and those who now are in favour of a voluntary Army, viz., the people who have been brought to the front by the voluntary system. Captain Rose and Captain Ellison in their military prize essays stated their objection to universal service on the ground that it was no use to have a large force for the defence of the country on account of the fleet, and that they would be of no advantage for a foreign Army. I traverse both these statements. I believe if we had a larger force of men who were trained, we should get more recruits for the foreign long-service Army. In addition to that, we should not be in the humiliating position which my son mentioned to me, who is in command of a Yeomanry company in South Africa, that with all the best intentions in the world and most patriotic feelings, many of the young fellows who came out to join knew neither how to shoot nor ride. If we had had universal service we should have had men who

were trained on joining, and the war would have been over long ago. In Colonel Dooner's objection with regard to universal service in Ireland, I do not see any difficulty whatever. My experience of the Irish soldier is that the longer he is a soldier the more loyal he becomes. I say most emphatically that if we had compulsory military service in Ireland—of course you would not give them arms and ammunition except when they were training—when they had done their soldiering I believe that any feeling of hostility to this country would be entirely eradicated. What Captain Quick said here two years ago is as true now as it was then, that we must either do one of two things: we must choose whether we shall join the progressive nations of the world along with our new ally, Japan, and go in for universal service and keep our Empire, or whether we shall join the dying nations of the world, like China, and lose it. We must divest our minds of cant in this matter. We must either drill or die.

Colonel E. PRYCE-JONES, M.P. (5th V.B. South Wales Borderers):—I am strongly of opinion that unless our country has some form of moderate courage to put into force the Militia Ballot Act we shall find ourselves in very bad circumstances before long. The way the Government has treated the Volunteers, as everybody knows, is most unsatisfactory. I ask those who do not agree with the object of this gathering, Why should I and hundreds throughout the country be Volunteers, and those who are not Volunteers get off? Why should one county—take Wales, as I come from the Principality—why should one particular county supply a Yeomanry regiment, a Militia battalion, and a Volunteer battalion, and other counties adjoining not even supply Volunteers? What I feel is that those who join the Volunteers should have some privileges or advantages, and that those who did not join should suffer some disability or inconvenience, or in some way suffer for not joining. It has been shown beyond disproof that our Army has been insufficient, even for present requirements, and surely under those circumstances it is incumbent, apart from party, for the nation to rise to the occasion and carry out the reform which this gathering proposes. I look at it in this way. Self-defence is the first law of Nature, and surely home and imperial defence should be the first duty of the country. It does not look well when we have to go to our Colonies for men and horses. It has been said that our rulers are very weak on this great question. I am bound to say that I think they are; but on the other hand it is partly our fault. We are here to focus public attention and bring to our leaders—Lord Salisbury, Rosebery, Campbell-Bannerman, and Chamberlain—assistance from public opinion. I believe the country would agree with this moderate form of compulsion. I have great pleasure in supporting the noble lord in this movement, and I hope that efforts will not cease after this gathering is over, but that the matter will be followed up.

T. MILLER-MAGUIRE, Esq., LL.D.:—It appears to me almost a work of supererogation for anyone to get up and support the thesis of the lecturer. If there are any opponents of obligatory military service at the present moment in London, they certainly do not show up here. They are hiding their diminished heads. I trust that you, Sir, and others will continue, as the last speaker said, to press strenuously this matter, and that before the end of the year 1903, we shall be in about the same position as our predecessors were in 1803, ready to cope with whatever Power, however formidable, even a Power as formidable as the Army under Napoleon himself. I see opposite me a gallant officer with whom I am sorry to differ; but General Sterling was one of the opponents of obligatory military service on the last occasion. He said that he did not believe that Germany owed its commercial greatness, material, intellectual, and so on, to obligatory military service. I do not say it does. I say we are a very great people.

intellectually, morally, and materially. But did obligatory military service between the years 1860 and 1900 prevent Germany from extending from a material, intellectual, and economical point of view? If Germany was not in the slightest degree prevented from being in a position to cope morally, intellectually, and commercially with other nations at the beginning of the twentieth century by reason of the most arduous system of conscription for thirty years, why should we be prevented from equal success by adopting a less arduous system? But the thing is not a novelty in the history of England. As Major Seely was speaking, I was carried back in imagination 100 years, between the years 1801 and 1805. Will the gallant admiral deny—and I should like an answer if I can get one—that the British Navy in the year 1803 and 1804 was, relative to the other Navies, in as good a position as it is now?

Admiral FREMANTLE :—Better.

Dr. T. MILLER-MAGUIRE :—I am sorry for that, because I would prefer to learn that we are rather better now. The gallant admiral admits that 100 years ago our Navy was, relatively to other Navies, in as good (he says better) a position as our Navy is in now. I see Captain Stewart Murray there. Will he assert that in the year 1801 to 1805, from the point of view of corn supply and food supply generally, the United Kingdom was not in as good a position, having regard to the chances of war, as it is now?

Captain MURRAY :—Better.

Dr. MILLER-MAGUIRE :—I think I have now the whole thing in a nut-shell. If our ancestors found it absolutely necessary before daring to cope with those legions of Napoleon which were encamped opposite our island at Boulogne—although Napoleon himself said that he scarcely hoped for ten minutes' command of the sea—if our ancestors adopted a system of compulsory military service in those years, why should not we adopt it now? In 1803 they adopted a Military Service Bill, and under the terms of that Bill every man had to serve. There were several Bills in this direction. There was legal conscription for the Regular Army abroad, and then every individual in regard to home defence must be a member either of the Navy or the Regular Army or the Militia or the Volunteers. The difficulty was solved. No man could go skulking about when his friends were willing to risk their lives in foreign fields or to meet the enemy in their own gate. All had to be ready; all had to prepare themselves, unless by any means they were unfit for duty. So again 100 years ago, in spite of reserves of corn, and in spite of plenty of meat and raw materials produced in the country itself, in spite of the Navy being so formidable under Nelson, in spite of our fleets being able to blockade Brest and Toulon and Rochefort, we found it necessary to retain a Regular Army, got how we could, by bounties however liberal, and yet we found it necessary to have an enormous Militia and Volunteer force for our population as it then was. Need I say anything more? In point of fact, in every crisis in the history of these islands, from the Conqueror days downwards, our Army has depended on the sound basis of having the military forces of the people themselves, all sturdy folk and all soldiers. As Lord Bacon said, trust not to mercenaries, trust not to allies. He said :—"Let no nation expect to be great unless the breed of its own people be composed of stout and valiant soldiers." He who trusts to allies and mercenaries may spread his wings for a while, but he will moult them soon after. The same remark applies to-day. Japan won't help you if you cannot help yourselves. The defence of England was founded on military service in the Hundred Years' War, in the time of Marlborough, in the time of the War of the Spanish Succession. When Pitt took in his hands the reins of the

British State the first thing he did, in the midst of the military disasters at the beginning of the Seven Years' War, was to press the necessity of an obligatory military service. There is not a single constitutional argument against it. I do not care a straw about the Constitution compared with efficiency. The object of a Constitution is to make us great, and not to keep us little. The object of party Government is for people to combine together to make the country as great as possible. If they are endeavouring to make it as little as possible, do I worship them? No; I scorn them! The Constitution being for the State, and not the State for the Constitution, it troubles me little whether the thing is constitutional or not. The War Office is constitutional enough, I suppose, and useless enough too. Do you admire your Constitution? You do. Very well: then I have you again; because obligatory military service is as much part of the British Constitution as that Bible of the British Constitution—the Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights. There was not a single framer of the original British Constitution who ever imagined a condition of things which was not founded on the military service of the baron, or the obligatory military service of the mass of the folk. Therefore whether you despise the Constitution or admire the Constitution you are not in any case enlisted against the principle of obligatory military service. The moral side of the question has been already pointed out. The character of the English of all classes, as the Bishop of Chester hinted, is distinctly degenerating absolutely and relatively through sport and luxury. Would it not be far better for the young men who are gathered together at these football matches to be training themselves for their country? I do not like to characterise the scenes I have seen in the Midlands and about Glasgow, and I am sorry to say about Belfast; would it not be better, infinitely better, for these crowds of youths and men between the ages of 17 and 55 to be practising musketry, military exercises, and drilling, than going about looking at other people playing games, just as was done in the gladiatorial days of decadent Rome? The mere fact of being a soldier elevates a man. Idly looking on at games deteriorates a man, and betting degrades a man. Mobbing referees is not valour. "Unless above himself he can erect himself, how poor a thing is man!" Military training elevates and dignifies alike the sons of indigence and the darlings of wealth. Observe the superiority of a gentleman going about with a sword by his side over another person of the same family going about with a pack of golf sticks by his side! Therefore, from every point of view, from the point of view of the history of your own nation, even when your Navy was supreme, and when your country grew all its own food, from the expansion of your Empire, from your traditions, from the Plantagenet times to the days of the Armada down to the days of King George III., from the constitutional point of view, from the moral point of view, I beg of you to think seriously of putting your military house in order. It is certainly not in order now—God, a day will not put it in order. If you are not going to found your State soundly at the beginning of this century as it was founded at the beginning of the last, on the pillars of naval and military efficiency and honour, you will soon see that dread writing on the wall, a writing which is always depicted, whether in the family or in the State, when people forget in their lives of luxury and amusement the only two principles of individual or national greatness, when they weary of hard, honest toil and of lofty thinking.

Captain STEWART L. MURRAY (Gordon Highlanders):—After the speech we have just heard there is not much to say, but I should like to back up the lecturer with regard to one or two points. One point is the absolute necessity of universal service for home defence in this country, and the other point is

that universal service would be a benefit to the working classes. As to the necessity of universal service. Our present military system, as Mr. Brodrick said last year in introducing the Army Re-organisation, is based on the possibility of a naval defeat. Mr. Brodrick said that you cannot run a great Empire like ours on an off-chance, on the chance that the Navy will never be beaten. The very existence of our Auxiliary forces is based on such a possibility. The possibility of a naval defeat is therefore accepted. For, as the late Admiral Sir John Commerell said last year in this theatre, "It is not given to man to command success." And everybody knows that it is impossible to foretell the fortune of war. We all hope that the Navy never will be beaten, but we must face the possibility, and that is the basis on which our military system rests to-day. Such being so, the next question is, what kind of invasion we should have to face if our Navy were defeated, or what amount of troops could the enemy throw upon our shores. On the number of troops by which we might be invaded must obviously depend the number of troops which we must prepare to meet such an invasion. Most people get over this question by ignoring it altogether. Others arbitrarily fix the possible number of an invading Army so as to suit our little Army, as if the enemy would be such fools as to invade us with a small force when they might invade us with a large, an overwhelming force. But that is not the way to answer it. The only way to answer it is to see what transport the enemy would have available. And if we look at the amount of transport which our enemies would have available, we must agree with what Sir John Colomb said in this theatre, that if once our Navy is defeated we shall have to face an invasion before which our little Army and Auxiliary forces would be helpless. That is to say that if the possibility on which our present military system is avowedly based were ever to happen, that military system would be found utterly inadequate to perform the duty for which it nominally exists. Most people in this country are utterly unaware of the vast troop-carrying capacity of the great mercantile marine which has sprung up on the shores of Europe during the last 30 years. It has come by degrees, and therefore it has been ignored. But it sums up to a tremendous total. Germany has now a steam mercantile marine of 1,500,000 tons, nearly all in great ocean liners. France has a mercantile marine of 1,000,000 tons, Russia of 600,000. Now we are accustomed to think only of ocean transport for a long voyage, allowing 5 tons per man. But for a short voyage you only require 1 ton per man, and 5 tons per horse. For such a voyage it is calculated that only 120,000 tons are required for an army corps complete. Of course the men would be crowded like sardines, but for a short voyage that would not matter. Now apply this to the available transport. I will take as an instance Germany. The Hamburg-American line and the North German Lloyd have each a steam tonnage of 600,000 tons in ocean liners. In 1910, when the new German Navy will hold the balance of naval power, and when we may expect trouble to begin, each of those lines will have 800,000 steam tons. Even at the present moment there are at Hamburg and Bremen always nearly 400,000 tons lying alongside the wharves, and in a fortnight that number would be doubled. In 1910 we must consider that there will be always from 500,000 to 600,000 lying there, and 1,000,000 or 1,200,000 available with a fortnight's warning. For an invasion of this country all the available mercantile marine would of course be "commandeered." For a small war that would not be done, but for a great war of course it would. Divide 120,000 tons into these figures, and we get the number of army corps which Germany could transport to our shores. We see that she has at present transport enough, if commandeered, to transport three army corps, and in 1910 will have enough always available to transport four army corps across the North Sea

Now as regards their facilities for embarkation. The growth of this vast new mercantile marine has been accompanied by a corresponding growth of harbour and wharfage accommodation. Along the ports on the Weser alone there are now no less than ten miles of wharves suitable to great liners, all with railway access, all with great cranes for loading, etc., all with deep water alongside: along these wharves nearly 200 great liners could load up simultaneously if required. It is unnecessary to go into further figures. It is plain if our Navy is ever defeated, Germany alone will be able at present to throw three army corps on to our shores, and in 1910 will be able to throw four army corps. But that is not all. Those three army corps would entrench themselves, while the liners went back at full speed to Germany: in a week another three army corps would arrive to reinforce the first three, and the liners returning to Germany would bring over three more in another week, so that we should have to face at the end of a fortnight from six to nine army corps grouped in two or three armies, and our task would be to overwhelm those before they received further reinforcements. Suppose eight army corps, or, roughly, 300,000 men were thus thrown upon our shores. To make certain of victory we should require to be two to one, that is to say, we should require 600,000 men. And these 600,000 would have to be troops sufficiently well trained and sufficiently disciplined to be able to accomplish successfully that hardest of all tasks, namely, to attack trained European troops holding fortified positions. We should be obliged to attack, for the industrial and financial conditions of this country would necessitate a short and decisive offensive campaign, for a defensive campaign would produce utter ruin commercially. But how are such numbers of trained troops to be obtained? There is only one way, and that is by a system of universal service for home defence. If the possibility of a naval defeat is the basis of our military system, as it admittedly is, then there is no escape from the logical conclusion that universal service for home defence is absolutely necessary. No other system will give us any security—any real security—from overwhelming invasion and conquest. Then there is the question as to whether universal service would be a benefit to labour. I assert that it would, and for this reason: There are always on an average about 500,000 men (exclusive of vagrants) in this country for whom there is no room in the labour market, who are consequently unemployed, about 100,000 trade unionists and 400,000 non-union men. If we took 200,000 young men of 20 years of age off the labour market each year and kept them for a year with the colours, we should create a vacuum into which would at once flow 200,000 of those older men for whom there was previously no room. We should thus at once reduce the number of the unemployed by nearly half, thus relieving the benefit funds of the unions of their support, and reducing the misery of our great cities very largely among the non-union men. Universal service for home defence would in fact be nothing more than a great system of State employment which would relieve the labour market very largely indeed. It is impossible to deny that such a system of State employment would be a benefit to the working classes. I will not say anything more on this point, but I think it is a point which requires to be brought forward strongly and placed before the country, for if it can be conclusively proved, as I am certain it can be, that universal service for home defence will be a benefit to labour, then I believe that the working classes would welcome it if it is properly put before them. We only want a statesman with sufficient courage to tell them the truth.

MR. EDWARD P. WARREN:—I have two disadvantages in rising in this hall, in that I am neither a soldier nor a speaker. I am a mere civilian with a slight military flavour, derived from some years of Volunteering. But I know that no one will object

to my rising as a civilian to speak on a question which is a civilian's question and a citizen's question. The gallant admiral who opened the discussion said that he thought the Volunteers, on the whole, were unfavourable to compulsory service. After a good many years spent in two different corps, I must say that my personal experience is directly to the contrary. I meet with no greater enthusiasts for compulsory service than my fellow Volunteers. The amount of military service which they have had, the insight into military affairs they have gained, and the very instinct which prompted them to become Volunteers, all make in the direction of believing that military knowledge should be imparted to the country at large and not possessed only by a small minority. They are also beginning to perceive the glaring injustice of a Volunteer system in which one man may sit by the fire and twiddle his thumbs while another more patriotic man goes out to do his duty for him at home or abroad. No man should shirk any kind of military duty for his country. I am quite certain that no soldier or sailor will find fault with a civilian for wanting to have some share, for a part of his life in the extreme privilege of serving as a soldier for his country. Surely it is, after all, the birthright of every citizen. From my knowledge of the working-man, and my profession brings me largely into contact with him, and I have every opportunity of talking with him about this plan, I am greatly encouraged to observe that the more intelligent workmen have a positive enthusiasm for compulsory military service. The foreman is a non-commissioned officer of the army of labour, who has risen by his intelligence, and he will tell you: "I wish to goodness we had compulsory military service, and all our men were being drilled and trained to obey someone. They are out of hand. They will not obey me or anybody." That is the testimony I think almost invariably borne. I have never met with a single rebuff during the many years in which I have tried to sound men of that class. This country is supposed to be a business country, and to view things in a business light. We have been many years applying to the principle of National Defence an amateur policy. But no business man would ever dream of applying amateurish principles to the business of civil life. A factory which was run by amateur workmen and amateur foremen would be little likely to succeed. Which of us would trust his life on a railway, the *personnel* of which only practised their vocation sometimes of an evening or on an occasional Saturday afternoon, the signalman, for instance, putting in as few odd hours in a signal-box, say twenty times during the year, and then standing with other signalmen in a row to be annually inspected? Yet we entrust our home defence in a large measure to amateurs. The rank and file of the Volunteers are composed of admirable stuff; but what about the officers? A Volunteer officer is precluded from any conceivable possibility of knowing his trade. He has no chance. How can a man learn such a very serious profession as that of a soldier, as serious as any profession can be, from a few odd hours and odd afternoons, a fortnight's encampment and casual reading? Besides the class from which the best Volunteer officer is taken is, generally speaking, the better order of professional men. The keen professional man has naturally his first pre-occupation in his profession, and his military duties can only come second. Is that a satisfactory state of things, that we should entrust the command of men, the lives of men, and in a large measure, the safety of an Empire, to men whose first pre-occupation is not the duty upon which so much depends, a duty of which at the most important moment of their whole lives they may find they know nothing? If we are to be invaded, we shall not be invaded by second-rate troops, but by the best, most seasoned, most thoroughly selected troops that our enemy can bring forward, and under the most carefully trained officers; and against these we are to oppose what, through no fault of their own, are the mere residuum which is left at the bottom of our military mixture. Speaking as a civilian, and as the father of

sons, the moral aspect of this question is what seizes the imagination of the civilian most. I think that the immense benefit which would accrue to this country by redeeming the nation of the band of loafers which permeates all ranks of society would be inestimable. They are in every grade of life, these men who will never willingly do a single honest stroke of work for their country. To give them a year's discipline at an age before they are hardened into mere loafers would be an inestimable advantage, not only to them, but to everyone connected with them. Then again one has to remember that the military service would be under conditions carefully regulated by the best military talent of the country, and could be hardly other than a physical boon to the hundreds of weakly lads whom the pressure of poverty or even the wishes of their parents prevent from ever getting a real spell of physical exercise, fresh air, and reasonable discipline. Therefore, these considerations have for many years made me feel that compulsory military and naval service was the only possible salvation of my country from an evil state of things into which, it seems to me, we are slipping more rapidly every day. Luxury on the one hand, carelessness on the other, and a besotted ignorance of our best interests. If we can be redeemed from that state of things by any means whatever—and I speak absolutely without consideration for the moment of the military side of the question—if we can gain such a moral advantage by a system like this, surely we shall be extremely unwise not to embrace it.

Colonel F. GRAVES (late Commanding 83rd Regimental District):—It seems to me as far as the audience is concerned to-day that the case for "Universal Service" is going to be carried almost from an *ex parte* point of view. As Sir Howard Vincent said last time, he wanted to see some man who had the pluck to go down to his constituents and declare himself in favour of compulsory service. To-day I would echo that by saying it seems to me rather a pity that we are all, as far as the meeting has gone, on the side of compulsory service in some form or another. We should like, I think, to see somebody else stand up and roll up his sleeves and fight on behalf of the voluntary system. However, as you have called upon me, I think, as a great deal of the discussion has been taken up by the general principle from the point of view of theory, it would be useful perhaps to touch on a few facts. And I would take as my first text the remarks of two gallant officers who opposed universal service on the last occasion, one being Sir Howard Vincent himself. In dealing with him I would just refer to his first argument, if one may even call it an argument. He argues that the adoption of any form of universal service in our country would do an "irremediable injury" to the men who are trained between 18 and 23 years of age, for one year. In that matter, all I can say is that judging from the good effect of even one month's training on the Militia Brigade under my command for five years, judging from the benefit acknowledged to be derived by the Germans themselves in the case of their working-men, I say that any system which has to be bolstered up by such an absurd argument as that must be rotten to the very core. Again, Sir Howard Vincent asks, What shall we gain by Mr. Shee's proposal more than we have now? And he unfolded to us a page full of statistics of battalions, brigades, and divisions. Where are they? On the paper he held in his hand! I reply by asking, What have we got now, and what are we supposed to have under the voluntary system? Under the voluntary system and its normal conditions of service, pay, pension, and so on, we are supposed to have an Army complete in all its parts, trained, and as the Duke of Cambridge often used to say, "ready to go anywhere and do anything." But have we got it? I say that we have not anything of the kind, and I am prepared to prove that assertion up to the hilt. If our voluntary service had given us

such an Army, why had we to go and buy up 25,000 Royal Reservists at £22 a head? These Royal Reservists had completed their 12 years and were outside the scope of the voluntary system altogether. The country had not a single claim upon them. They could have refused to go: but because our voluntary system had failed, we went and paid in the open market £22 a head for them, and got them. What are we doing this very day? We are buying up the Reservists in India to the tune of £16 10s. a head, and we have something like 15,000 of them. Why? Because the voluntary system has failed. Again, we got 20,000 Imperial Yeomanry and 12,000 South African Constabulary at 5s. a day. Why? We have gone outside the ordinary terms of our voluntary system of enlistment to get these men; the voluntary system could not give them to us. Why had we to go outside the voluntary terms of enlistment and beg of 40,000 Militia and Volunteers to come to our help? These men were not enlisted under the ordinary terms of voluntary enlistment to go outside the country, and we had to go and get them. Why? Because the voluntary system could not give us that 40,000 men we wanted. Again I quote against Sir Howard Vincent one of the greatest known authorities on military matters under the moon—I quote himself. In his very excellent, able, and thoughtful article, which I think is an extremely valuable one, which appears in the JOURNAL of this Institution this month, he tells us that in South Africa alone they have raised 90 corps, equal to 60,000 men. In the South African Constabulary there are 12,000. We have actually gone to the extent of employing national Boer scouts to the number of 4,000, and Colonials 14,000. There is a big list. Of the latter he says—now mark these words, as I am quoting him against himself:—“Of all troops they can be least spared. . . . Indeed, the war could not have been carried on without them” Why? Because the voluntary system has failed. There is no other reason in the world. I sum up this point by just asking, Does the bulk of this intellectual and intelligent audience realise the fact that at this moment of the 250,000 men serving the Empire in South Africa over one-half have been drawn together absolutely outside of our system of voluntary service, its conditions and terms, simply on account of the absolute and utter failure of that system? Sir John Colomb, the other opponent of the universal idea, said that he did not think Mr. Shee had proved the “necessity” of universal service. I do not think Mr. Shee is called upon to prove the necessity of it. I think the facts that are now obtaining, and will certainly arise in the near future, will prove the necessity without Mr. Shee’s help or anybody else’s help. Facts will prove this. I will just quote the Inspector-General of Recruiting. His report says that last year there was a reduction of 2,000 recruits; that the year 1900 showed a reduction on 1899. And mark this—in a time of war. Infantry recruiting, he says, is “unsatisfactory,” and that it is a “matter for grave consideration.” Why? Because when the war is over, when that peace we all so much desire comes, I tell you authoritatively—I have had it on what I consider conclusive authority—we shall require not simply a normal rate of something like 40,000 recruits a year, but we shall want another 40,000 or 50,000 over and above that to fill up gaps. If the voluntary system cannot supply a sufficient Army in South Africa in time of war, in time of stress and public enthusiasm, is it going to supply an Army when that peace comes and people say:—“It is all right. We will muddle through another time as we have done this time.” When the war is over it will be a crucial time in our national history, and it will require, as the Inspector-General says, the very gravest consideration as to what steps must be taken to obviate the difficulties we are in. It comes to this. It is a question of expediency at present, but I believe it will become a question of necessity in the near future. In five great countries each soldier costs on the average £42 a year. That may be written down as the national military premium

of insurance. The cost in the United Kingdom is £123, which includes every expense connected with the soldier. What does the difference between the £42 and the £123 represent? It represents a great fact which I do not believe the British public have accepted or realised yet, and perhaps even some of this audience have not realised it. If the amount of the national military insurance ought to be only £42 per head, in what does the difference consist between that and the £123? It means that the necessity of universal military service is admitted, that balance difference representing the personal ransom paid by the non-fighting tax-payer to someone to go and do his work for him. It comes to this, that we must either double that personal ransom in the shape of taxation for extra pay or we must have universal military service in some shape or form. I should just like to say two or three words in conclusion. We have got to take people as they are and circumstances as they are, and not quite as we think they ought to be. We have to deal with deep-rooted, long-lasting, time-worn prejudices. I believe there is a deep-rooted prejudice in the British mind to the word "compulsion." I would rather use the word "universal." I object very strongly to another word in Mr. Shee's lecture, the word "sacrifice." I do not think that universal military service ought to be looked upon from the point of view of sacrifice, a sacrifice endured grudgingly, unwillingly, half-heartedly, with a grumbling submission. We have to remember that we have a God-given Empire on which the sun never sets, that the foundations of that Empire have been dug out by the bayonet point and the sword point, and have been embedded in the graves of our brothers, our own flesh and blood, that that Empire has been set up and cemented with the best blood, although the humblest of the country. I say then God speed the day when universal service shall not be looked upon as a personal sacrifice, but shall be looked upon by the manhood of our nation as a glorious heritage and a cherished and inalienable privilege.

Lieut.-Colonel T. H. BAYLIS, K.C. (late 18th Middlesex V.R.C.) :—I have great pleasure in saying a few words to-day, as one of the oldest Volunteers, having joined in 1859, and believing that it is essential to make the Services more attractive by greater privileges and exemptions, to increase their numbers, and to obtain proficiency. The lecturer has stated thirteen reasons for compulsory service, and four objections to it. The first objection is that "It is an interference with the liberty of the subject." I take this one objection. The word "compulsory" is repulsive to a free people with free institutions, especially where it interferes with personal liberty, of which an Englishman is proud all over the world. At present, public opinion is against compulsory service, the *vox populi* is against conscription or even the Ballot. I need only refer to the Militia Ballot Act, 1860, which contains all the machinery for putting the Ballot Act in force, yet the 27th section provides that all proceedings shall cease and be suspended until directed by an Order in Council. That Act was again re-enacted by the Militia Suspension Act, 1865, and continued to the present time by the Expiring Laws Continuance Act, 1901. Then there is the recent "Volunteer Act, 1900," which enacts that for the words "actual or apprehended invasion of any part of the United Kingdom" in the Volunteer Act, 1863, there shall be substituted the words "imminent national danger," or "great emergency," the occasion being first communicated to both Houses of Parliament, and, if not sitting, by an Order in Council and notified by proclamation. It is all very well to say a thing is desirable, but the question is, Is it practicable? I do not think that compulsory service is. In the present state of public opinion, the Legislature and the Government would not venture to put in force the Ballot Acts or make the Services compulsory. The lecturer further

suggests that the professional Army shall remain "Voluntary," and the Army for home defence "Compulsory"; the two cannot co-exist. I cannot but express my gratitude to the lecturer for having brought the subject of his paper so ably and forcibly before us, and hope that it will at all events wake up public opinion before imminent national danger or great emergency arises, when it may be too late.

SIR RALPH H. KNOX, K.C.B. (late Permanent Under Secretary of State for War) :— I am not prepared to discuss the question of the Roman or the Grecian organisation, or even the Swiss organisation, but I came down here, having the advantage of listening to the debates which took place on the two former days, prepared to make a few remarks on the paper, which I confess I have hardly heard spoken about while I have been in the room. The general question of liability to service has been discussed very freely, and everybody seems to desire universal service. Mr. Shee has proposed a method of carrying it out, and if the scheme is practicable that is what we want. I am prepared with a few remarks as to the method adopted by Mr. Shee, and I am prepared to show that the scheme he has proposed presents a very large number of difficulties. To the general principle of universal service, in the defence of the motherland, I believe there are few objectors—there are certainly none in this room. As has been stated, the liability to compulsory service exists upon our Statute Book in the Militia Ballot, and, therefore, the principle is generally acknowledged. I am not prepared to combat it, and I believe that the idea of service in defence of the country is a very popular idea, and this is proved by that much-despised force, despised apparently even by some members of it—the Volunteers. I can remember in 1859, in an emergency, how men of all ranks rushed to join the Volunteers uninvited, absolutely of their own free will, offering their services in the face of much discouragement and much difficulty. The Volunteer Force has existed from that day to this, increasing every year in numbers; so much so that this fact, which is not generally recognised, is true, that 50,000 men have, for some years past annually joined that force, replacing 50,000 men who wisely have resigned after 4 or 5 years' service. I should like to see more Volunteers than there are now, and, as you all know, many joined last year. The number given in the Estimates, which I looked at this morning, shows that 300,000 Volunteers were returned as efficient on the 1st November last, which proves, as it appears to me, that generally amongst the young and active members of the community a liability to serve in the defence of the country is not unpopular. But when we come to a continuous compulsory service, universal liability, a different question arises. Mr. Shee, in his able and interesting book, and in his lecture, gives the numbers which he thinks would be available supposing compulsory service were introduced. The three points I should like to lay stress upon are the principles or conditions upon which the service is to be carried out, the suggested organisation and the cost. I find that the young men who reach the age of 20 each year in this country amount to 380,000. Of that number, the number of those unfit, according to the proportions existing in the German Army, would be 30,000—30,000 declared physically and morally unfit—which reduces the number to 350,000. It is proposed by the lecturer that 40,000 should be handed over to the Navy—I presume to be paid for, and trained by the naval authorities. Certainly the naval authorities would have to bear some charge for that 40,000. That brings the number down to 310,000, but the lecturer assumes that there would be only 210,000 available. That leaves a difference of 100,000 men. I can see no suggestion as to how this 310,000 is to be reduced to 210,000, except a hint that they may be all declared unfit; but to believe that that proportion of young men in this country, viz., one out of every three, would be unfit for military service in the

defence of their country is a wild idea, and it is evident they cannot be rejected on that ground. This reduction made by the lecturer from 310,000 to 210,000 is obviously made for some purpose—he wants to get rid of that 100,000 men somehow or other. Either he finds the Force too large, according to his notions of the necessity of the case, or they cost too much. It is perfectly clear to my mind that he thinks they would cost too much, because one of the most prominent portions of his scheme is that he is going to hand over £12,000,000 of the Army money to the Navy to spend. I therefore question altogether his figures as to the number of men who would be available in his system. If the 310,000 were annually raised it would produce a Force of 2,600,000, but if the Force is reduced to 210,000, assuming that the men serve for 10 years, the Force produced would be 1,810,000. Now for the purpose of argument let me take the 210,000 as the figure, producing 1,810,000 as the number which would exist with the colours and in the Reserve. Can it be called a Force—210,000 recruits and 1,500,000 men in reserve? How could such a Force as that possess a continuity? It is not an Army. It is simply a mass of men. Such a proportion of reserves to men with the colours, those men being mere recruits serving for their one year, would give no cohesion whatever. But what a number of highly-trained officers and non-commissioned officers would be needed for the marshalling and instruction of this Force! How would it be mobilised? Out of such a Force as that could even the 50,000 men sent from our shores two years ago be gathered and despatched? It seems to me that from an organisation of that kind you can expect no Force for an expeditionary purpose at all. The lecturer seems to think that is the case, because he says he must have 20,000 men besides ready to go anywhere and do anything. But 20,000 men are not sufficient for our purposes. We must be able to produce a thoroughly trained professional Force ready, as soon as the ships are ready, to embark upon expeditions, far in excess of 20,000 men, and such an organisation as he sets afoot certainly would not provide it. But one prominent difficulty which arises from the scheme which has been laid down by the lecturer is this, that the whole of our Regular Army with the exception of the 20,000 men, is to be a foreign service Army. The men when they are enrolled in the professional Army are to be sent abroad practically for their lives, certainly for the whole of their service with the colours. Now, that is a system which has been thoroughly condemned by everybody who has had any experience whatever of military affairs. It is a system which is absolutely unworkable. Locating a number of soldiers abroad to serve in most trying climates for the whole of their military service is a system which destroys the Force as a military Force, and, further, is most destructive and trying to the lives and health of the men. Next, I would deal with the calculations which are to result in placing at the disposal of the Navy the sum of £12,000,000 a year. In the interesting little book which we have all read, economics were to be effected by calling in the aid of the business man, but confidence in this expedient seems to have waned, and a new development appears in the lecture. It may have been hinted in the pamphlet, though not declared, but it is distinctly stated now that the conscripts are to receive a "merely nominal remuneration." This means that the conscript is to serve not only in person, but in purse. What happens in Continental Armies is well known. The soldier is mainly supported by his family at home—what the State gives is a most meagre subsistence, with the result of a specially heavy burden on the poorest of the people. No pay would operate similarly in this country. More than half the families in this kingdom, each consisting of nearly five persons, live on an average income of just over £100 a year. This of course gives no margin to allow the forcible withdrawal of an earner, accompanied by

the additional burden on the family of a charge for his maintenance while serving. I believe that the fair-mindedness of the people of this country would not permit this heavy tax to be imposed on the industrial classes, but would insist on the man who was compelled to serve being paid quite the present wage in return for his time and labour. Now, the saving of £12,000,000 mainly rests on this proposal: but let us see whether, even with this assistance, the result stated can be obtained. It is estimated that the conscribed Army, together with 20,000 long-service men forming the special Force ready at a moment's notice to go anywhere, and the Army serving abroad outside India, will cost no more than £18,000,000. To commence with the last-mentioned Force. In the lecture the foreign Army is set down as 30,000 men, but the Army Estimates of £30,000,000, with which comparison is made, provides the money for 63,000 serving abroad outside India, or an excess of 33,000, raising the number of the so-called professional Army to 83,000. The sum taken for each man in the paper, viz., £110, is too great; £90 for a man serving abroad is nearer the cost, and at this rate the foreign service Army would cost £7,500,000, leaving £10,500,000 for the home conscribed Army. Now, how does this work out? I first take the officers who will command and instruct this constantly changing body of men. The present number would obviously be insufficient for a Force three times the size, 1,000,000 of the men being trained every year, but I take them at the number and cost provided in the votes of 1898. These would cost £1,500,000; the non-commissioned officers similarly estimated would cost another £1,500,000. And the horses, guns, reserves of stores, and administrative charges are taken at a sum of £2,000,000. In all £5,000,000, but evidently much less than the expense would be. This sum, however, added to £7,500,000, making a total of £12,500,000, leaves £5,500,000 for the conscripts. Now to calculate the charge for the conscripts: 210,000 men are to train for one year; but the cavalry and artillery, one third of these, are to have $1\frac{1}{2}$ years, and in addition to this, the original body is to be trained in alternate years for a month during the first five years of service and for a fortnight twice during the second five years. Allowing for a decrease annually in the 210,000 men, which will bring them down in their last year to about 165,000, I calculate that the equivalent to 292,000 men will have to be provided for in each year for the whole year. This number divided into £5,500,000 gives a sum of £18 10s. to meet the whole expenses of the year for each man. Truly a problem for our business man. Now, the total cost of an infantry private soldier per annum may be taken at £48 10s. The pay, however, is to go; this helps us to the extent of £18. His rations and messing allowance must, I fear, also go at £10, with some portion of his clothing at £2—total, £30. In this way we should get down to the figure £18 10s. available. With this money he could have some clothes, his rifle and ammunition, his barrack-room and transport, and also his doctor, whose care, under the circumstances, will certainly be needed. No, my Lord, this scheme for universal compulsory service is not practicable. If the men are to serve continuously for a year, pay, rations, and full clothing must be provided: and, so far from a saving of £12,000,000 being available for the Navy, the cost would amount to from £30,000,000 to £35,000,000, against a sum of £28,000,000 now taken as the total of the normal Army Estimates, even on the assumption that the annual contingent can be limited to 210,000 men.

Major W. H. S. HERON-MAXWELL (late Royal Fusiliers).—As a whole-hearted believer in the cause Mr. Shee is so ably championing, I beg to express my great admiration of his work. I would urge that the Press be approached with the view of educating the mass of the people to recognise that "universal service" alone can fit us to carry on the work of the Empire and enable us to meet the chances of war

without panic. A great American has said that "The destinies of individuals are ever subordinate to the public weal." May we as a nation re-echo those words and act up to them !

Lient.-Colonel R. M. HOLDEN, 4th Bn. The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles):—At this stage of the discussion it is not my intention to occupy your time for long. But I should like to add a few remarks in the hope of their having the effect of strengthening the arguments which have been already adduced in favour of the principle of compulsory, or, as I prefer to call it, universal military service for home defence. It seems to be assumed by some people in this country, and even in this room, that the principle is a new one. It is nothing of the sort. From the earliest period to which our documents reach, universal military service for home defence has been the law of the land. Down to the year 1757 this principle was religiously enforced in regard to service in the old Fyrd and the Militia. In that year the ballot for the Militia was introduced, which remains on the Statute Book to this day, and Lord Wemyss will be interested to hear that it was put into operation as late as the year 1831, in his own lifetime. The supersession of the Volunteer force—which occasions so much concern in certain quarters—by a compulsory Militia is again no novelty, for the same thing occurred in 1808, when the local Militia gradually superseded the Volunteer force of that period. I am sure that everyone in this country has the greatest admiration for the Volunteer force and for the spirit of patriotism which has kept it alive. But why should it be necessary to maintain such a force ? It is a principle which cannot be gainsaid, besides being part of the constitutional law of the land, that everyone who receives the protection of society owes a return to the State for the benefit. The very existence of the Volunteer force is to my mind, therefore, a standing reflection upon every able-bodied man who is not serving or who has not seen service in some branch of the naval or military forces of the Empire. Every honourable man should bear his share in the defence of his country, his home, and his fireside ; and it is surely an anomaly that, while in the case of a disturbance in the streets, the police are empowered in the King's name to call upon the public to render assistance, in the event of the very existence of the country being at stake we can make no similar call upon able-bodied men to lend a hand. It is very satisfactory to find so many people in this room agreeing in the principle advocated by Mr. Shee, but the British public and the man in the street require conversion to the same view of the matter if we are to hope for success. Colonel Cave, to whom I am sorry to find myself opposed, attaches great weight to the fact that in a recent competition for the gold medal of this Institution, on the very subject which we are now discussing, the two first prizes were awarded to the essays which advocated voluntary as opposed to compulsory service. I am sure it will interest my gallant friend to learn that in 1874, when a far greater number of officers competed in an essay on the same subject, the gold medal was unanimously awarded to the essay of Colonel H. W. L. Hime, R.A., which advocated universal conscription, as the only answer to the recruiting question. That essay shows evidence of great ability and research, and I strongly recommend its study by those interested in this important subject. It has been asked by some speakers whether recruiting for the Army is in so unsatisfactory a condition as to justify the remedy proposed by the lecturer. To my mind, universal military service would be desirable in however satisfactory a condition recruiting were. But we know that since the introduction of a Standing Army this country has never succeeded in obtaining by voluntary means a constant and never-failing supply of desirable recruits, and we know that this difficulty has now assumed such alarming proportions as to render doubly desirable the necessity for a change, or

rather a reversion to the principles of universal service which formerly prevailed in this country. I think it is open to question whether we are altogether justified, strictly speaking, in boasting of our Army as a voluntary one. Every recruit enlists, it is true, of his own free will, but I know sufficient about recruiting to be aware that a large proportion adopt the profession of arms because they have no other option. Want of work and misfortune are responsible for the greater portion of the recruits to our much-boasted voluntary Army. It seems to me that our great difficulty is a sufficient Army for foreign service anywhere in the world. That Mr. Shee's scheme will give a sufficient Army for home defence is certain. That it will solve the former difficulty is not so certain, although I think it is quite reasonable to assume, from our experience of the volunteering for service in South Africa, that it will do so. I am not troubled with the fear entertained by some people that universal service for home defence will sap the volunteering spirit; but I am a little doubtful about the advisability of introducing universal service in Ireland, in view of the element of disloyalty and hostility to this country which prevails there. I understand that the lecturer does not consider himself bound to the details of his scheme; otherwise I should be inclined to query some of his financial conclusions, and to doubt whether the wage-earning classes in this country who have to contribute to the support of their homes, will submit to be called away from their work for a whole year for a merely nominal fee. I think they will have to be paid a fair wage. These, however, are matters of detail, and do not affect the principle of universal service which the lecturer has so ably advocated, and with which I am in hearty agreement. I do trust that should such a scheme be introduced there will be no exemption, and that the duke, the parson, and the peasant will be equally liable.

Colonel F. H. MOUNTSTEVEN (3rd Bn. Devonshire Regiment, late Captain R.M.L.I.) :—I have taken great interest in this question since the days of the Crimean War, when I well remember seeing foreign mercenary troops forming a portion of the Plymouth garrison, and I do most sincerely hope that our Government may never again be compelled to engage foreign mercenaries to perform duties which should properly devolve on the manhood of this country. I think it is generally conceded that since the introduction of steam as a motive power, the English Channel is not such a formidable barrier as it was in the days of sailing-ships, when Napoleon contemplated an invasion of these shores; and considering the marvellous inventions of recent years, it is not inconceivable that the advantage we possess in our sea frontier may be still further reduced in the future, when we may find ourselves face to face with Continental Powers whose whole manhood is trained to arms. Do we at present possess a Home Defence Army sufficiently trained and disciplined to meet the picked troops of a hostile force, which, in the event of a disaster to our Fleet, might be landed on our shores? I think that few soldiers of experience would answer this question in the affirmative. It must be obvious that our Colonies which have rendered us such splendid assistance in the present war would be powerless to aid us in the event of a sudden invasion: we must rely entirely on ourselves; and, bearing in mind the catastrophe which overwhelmed France when the Germans, having defeated the French Regular Army, contemptuously brushed aside the armed but undisciplined peasantry in their march on Paris, I think it is time we trained and disciplined the male population of these islands in such a manner as would make them capable of successfully resisting any force they might be called upon to encounter. Since the outbreak of the present war I have been responsible for the training of a large number of young soldiers—some of these were by no means good specimens of what young Englishmen should be; however, after a

few months of steady drill and discipline, their improvement, both moral and physical, was wonderful. Later on I took several hundred of these young soldiers to South Africa, where I witnessed their steady behaviour under fire, also their considerate conduct towards the Boer women and children when the latter were removed from their farms; this experience only confirms the belief I have always held, that it would be of great benefit to the individual, and also to the community, if the young men of this country were so trained as to make them efficient in the use of a rifle, and I believe such training might very well take place under canvas in the summer without materially interfering with ordinary avocations, probably a great many of these men having developed a taste for soldiering, would join the ranks of the foreign service Army.

Commander The Hon. Henry N. SHORE, R.N. (Retired):—The duty incumbent on every citizen of bearing arms in defence of his country is, I fear, pretty generally recognised as an abstract doctrine which never requires to be translated into practice. The difficulty lies in persuading people that the duty is incumbent on them at *the present time*. Hence, like the copy-book maxims which were instilled into us by frequent repetition at school, this duty is more honoured in the breach than in the observance. The objections which are advanced against the doctrine of compulsory service usually take the following form: "I admit the justice of the contention as to the duty of bearing arms in defence of the country; but I do not recognise the necessity of putting it into practice at the present time; and what is more, I look on the analogy which you have drawn between the condition of this country and the Continental States as an entirely false one. With the latter compulsory service is a matter of life or death: seeing that the War Ministers have merely to press a button and give the order 'March!' and the armed hosts march; and woe betide the nation that is not prepared to meet and defeat the invader on the frontier! With Great Britain it is different. Providence has placed us in the midst of waters, with a wide and deep ditch between us and the armed hosts of the Continent, which forms an insuperable obstacle to their march. The Navy is our defence, and experts assure us that, as long as the Navy is sufficiently powerful and efficient we need be under no apprehensions as to invasion. Napoleon, after subjugating the entire Continent, and commandeering its armed forces, and after spending several millions in preparations for the invasion of this Kingdom, had to give up the attempt as hopeless, and to beat an ignominious retreat from the coast. And what Napoleon with the armed forces of Europe at his back failed, to accomplish is scarcely likely to be attempted by any sane person at the present day. Besides, we have thriven very well for 1,000 years without compulsory service, and I fail to see the necessity of turning the country upside down in preparation for a purely imaginary danger." Now, all this may be very shortsighted, but it is impossible to deny that there is a certain amount of truth in it; and until people can be brought to recognise the danger of their position, it is useless preaching the doctrine of compulsory service as a sort of panacea for all our social ills. Unless people can be persuaded that invasion is not only possible, but extremely probable, and that they invited it by their careless contempt of danger, they will never consent to be compelled to serve their country. "Liberty," as an intelligent Persian traveller remarked, after visiting England in 1799, "may be considered as the idol, or tutelary deity of the English." And, he continues: "The most conspicuous defect in the English character is pride. Puffed up with their power and good fortune for the last 50 years, they are not apprehensive of adversity and take no pains to avert it."¹ If disaster overtakes us, it will not

¹ *Travels of Mirza Abu Taleh Khan*. London, 1810.

be for want of candid friends nor warning voices. An "English Officer," in a series of *Letters from Spain*, published in 1779, admonished his countrymen in very much the same terms as those of the present lecturer. "The military character," he wrote, "was always of great importance to us, and seems now to be becoming highly necessary again. Our political place in Europe may soon be such as to make it absolutely necessary for us all to learn to fight; the number and situation of our enemies may make a constant guard and general discipline as necessary to us as to any other military nation: and we are constantly subject to this danger from the intrigues of our enemies. I could wish it were again a fashionable part of education for most of our young gentlemen to serve a few years. To neglect, discourage, and cry down the military spirit, as is usual with us in time of peace, is a most dangerous doctrine. If country gentlemen are weak enough to be jealous of their defenders, why do they not learn to defend themselves? It is when a small and separate part only of a nation is military, that the nation is in a real state of danger and debility; and our safety would every way consist in military knowledge and practice being common and general among us." And he goes on to express the hope that, in time, "there will be wisdom enough to render the education of all ranks somewhat military; this, I think, indispensable, and believe that no State can be lasting where the people have lost the use of arms. . . . the use of arms, and a liberal kind of discipline, will confer a certain dignity of mind, and the people become thence, not less, but more capable of order, obedience, and regularity, and might, therefore, be more safely trusted with liberty. . . . Let us hope that the martial spirit will spread and take root among us, and that a general circulating Militia, in which all serve in their turn, will at length be established, so as to supply a small but well-disciplined Army, and render the people more military and more orderly." Had these opinions, which were promulgated in 1779 been acted on, how much suffering, and wasteful extravagance in consequence of unreadiness for war, would the nation have been spared! And yet 120 odd years after, the same warning has to be reiterated by the lecturer, who has just now so ably expounded the duty of citizenship. Of the physical, moral, and intellectual advantages to be derived from a regular military training, as suggested by the lecturer, there can be but one opinion. But why defer it to the age of 18—till vicious habits have become engrained in the system, and the youths of our cities have become Hooligans¹—a danger to society, and a curse to the country? Surely, we cannot begin to teach the duties of citizenship too early. Why not engraft discipline, and a proficiency in the use of the rifle on to the existing educational systems of the Kingdom? Just think of the benefits to be derived from a month spent under canvas every year, under strict military discipline, and under instruction in the use of the rifle, with abundant opportunities for practice at the target! Surely, one month could well be spared out of the two months of idleness which the well-to-do youth of the land consider necessary for their salvation every summer! The taste thus imparted for military pursuits would bear abundant fruit in after years, and prepare the ground for a further development of the system. It would be the thin end of the wedge of "compulsory service," which after all is but the outward expression of a voluntary act of a free people, by which they exercise a little

¹ A "Hooligan" has recently been defined by the secretary of a charitable society as "one who might have been saved from a reckless and dangerous life by careful early protection and training. . . . It is admitted that physically, and very often mentally, this class of youth is by no means inferior to any other; in short, for want of early training the nation is being deprived of the services of its best citizens."—H. N. S.

self-denial, and surrender a *very* small amount of boasted "liberty"—which, at present, is so shamefully abused by a section of the community—for the good of the country? But why call it "compulsory" service, which is a word of offence to so many people? Why not call it "universal service," and thus take the sting out of it?

Fleet Engineer GEORGE QUICK, R.N. :—I beg leave to express an opinion on this subject from an engineering point of view. In all engineering work there is what is known as a "margin of safety," which varies somewhat according to the nature of the structure. In the Tay Bridge, which was destroyed 28th December, 1879, the designer imagined that he had a sufficient margin of safety to obtain the security of the structure. Other engineers had denounced the bridge as deficient in strength. The bridge had stood for several months, and, consequently, there was some evidence that the designer was right and the critics wrong. But the bridge fell before a gale, and then it was easily proved that the margin of safety had never been large enough, that the bridge had been *badly designed, badly constructed, and badly maintained*. For many years the people of this Empire have believed that they have had a sufficient margin of safety for these islands in their Fleet and voluntary service system. It has been in vain that the grand old warriors who had built up the Empire warned the people that the forces of destruction in other countries had grown enormously in power, that circumstances had changed, that we could no longer rely on the immunities we had enjoyed in the past, and that our "margin of safety" as a nation had ceased to exist. The great Duke of Wellington wrote and spoke in vain. General Sir Harry Smith, the hero of Aliwal, on 17th May, 1859, with his fifty years of war experience, writing on the security of these islands, said :¹—"I would *gradually* enrol every man in England who has a vote and teach them to *shoot*." Again on 6th February, 1860, he wrote :—"My war-cry for England has ever been 'Arm the people.' Pluck enough they have, and, with prompt obedience, England's Regular Army, so nobly supported and its numbers so increased can, may, and will defy the devil. Let our watchword be, 'Arm the people.'" In the JOURNALS which this Institution has issued during the last forty years are to be found recorded the opinions of many naval and military officers, which show the same statesmanlike foresight as those of the old warrior Sir Harry Smith, but the people and Government have been blind—a case of cataract in both eyes—and all the shouting in the world will not enable the blind to see. It remained for the farmers of South Africa to partially remove the cataract from one of our eyes. It has been a painful operation extending over two years, but it has been so far only very slightly successful. Whether it will be sufficiently so to enable us to see the necessity of casting aside the cowardly and imbecile prejudice we have against doing our natural duty to ourselves, our country, and our King remains to be seen. If we have become so utterly decadent as to refuse to do our natural duty—that is, to refuse to adopt universal military training—we will deserve, and shall undoubtedly get, what Sir Harry Smith described as "a touch of the blessings of Tortona," which may be interpreted as the invasion of England and the ruin of our Empire. The assertions of the extreme naval school that a powerful Navy combined with our voluntary military system is sufficient for the needs of the Empire is entirely disproved by our position in Africa to-day. If those valiant pundits who desired to go to war with Turkey on account of the Armenians had been in power, I beg to ask how our voluntary system would have supported a war in Turkey and in South Africa? I maintain as strongly as anyone that we want a really powerful Navy

¹ Autobiography of Sir Harry Smith, Vol. II., pp. 317-322.

with more naval ports on our east coast, enlarged dockyards, more torpedo stations, that our mercantile marine should receive subsidies of £6,000,000 per annum to provide a *subsidiary naval reserve of cruisers and British seamen*. But all these would not suffice for the needs of the Navy in war. We should want an immense reserve of trained fighting men for our Royal Navy to replace casualties and to man our ships in the reserve, and the ships which I hope we shall capture from the enemy. But if some good magician would present us immediately with 100 of the most powerful battle-ships and 300 of the finest cruisers, the needs of our Empire would still demand that every British man and boy should receive military training in order that our strength should be proportionate to our size, and that our people should be able, *under any circumstances*, to defend themselves, not only on the sea, but also on every square inch of land of which the Empire consists. But even if we knew we should not be called on to fight on our own islands, it would still be necessary for us to adopt universal military training in order to improve the physical strength and stamina of our people, so that foreign nations should not overwhelm us with their superior numbers and their improved powers of body, mind, and character, which they have derived and are still accumulating from their universal compulsory military service. Unfortunately statistics show that there has been a terrible falling off in the physical strength and fecundity of the British people, and that we are rushing downhill with fatal rapidity. But this is too large a subject to be treated of in this discussion. One point I would wish to call attention to, that is, the great disproportion between the number of men and women in these islands, the number of women in excess of men being 1,278,000; whilst in other nations there is a very large number of men in excess of the number of women, in Great Britain there are 106 women to 100 men, but in Russia there are 121 men to 100 women. This does not appear a matter of very great importance until we consider that out of our population of 41,500,000 we have only 20,160,000 males of all ages to draw upon for our fighting men; whereas out of 41,500,000 of Russians of both sexes there would be upwards of 22,750,000 of males to draw upon for fighting men, or 2,500,000 more males than we have. This means *that out of the same number of people the Russians could produce nearly 400,000 more working-men and fighting-men than we could do in any case*. I have mentioned this to prove the most urgent necessity we are under that every boy under 18 shall be *compelled* to undergo military drill to prepare him not only for his military or naval duties, but also for the formation of a strong and healthy body and a sound mind for his everyday work: for at present we are as deficient of vigorous, healthy working-men as we are of fighting-men. This question of drill for all our boys, *the cultivation of physical obedience to the word of command*, is of fundamental importance in connection with providing a real fighting naval reserve for a great naval war. The period of greatest physical development is from 14 to 18 years of age, and it is at this period that compulsory military training should be carried on. That is the most receptive age when the moral and physical character can be most easily and most permanently impressed for good. It is also the period when the wage-earning capacity is very small and employment difficult to obtain. This physical training would vastly increase the working value of our young men and would repay its cost ten times over. Lord Meath has proved that it can be easily and economically carried out all over the country if the Government will but give a little aid. If the lads between 14 and 18 were efficiently trained *under the military authorities* their six months' service in the Militia would turn them out more highly disciplined and more skilful soldiers than a whole year spent in the Militia without the preliminary training as lads above referred to. But the Militia must contain large numbers of artillery, engineers, and mounted rifles, and these branches require far more technical

and practical training than infantry: therefore, the men of these special arms should have a full year's training, and they should receive a higher rate of pay than the infantry in consequence of their extra work and greater length of training. By this arrangement we could train the same number of men, 250,000 annually, as proposed by the able lecturer, but a very great saving of time and money would be effected. The maximum number of men under training at any time would be only 150,000. Of these 50,000 men would be trained for one year for the artillery, engineers, and mounted rifles: and two batches of 100,000 each would be trained for six months as infantry—the training of the first 100,000 men might extend from the 10th January to 25th June, and the training of the second 100,000 men from the 1st July to the 15th December. Thus two-fifths of the establishment charges as regards barracks, instructional staff of officers, food and pay would be saved, and in addition the industrial labour market would be deprived of the services of only 150,000 men for a whole year, although 250,000 men would be thoroughly well disciplined and trained for fighting every year. Whatever plan of universal military training and of Militia service may be adopted, *I sincerely trust that the number of men in our voluntary service Regular Army will not be reduced.* If the system, which the lecturer has so ably set forth, or some efficient modification thereof, be adopted, I am convinced that it will beneficially affect all our Regular Forces. In the first place, recruiting will be facilitated and enlistment become most popular, because thousands of high-spirited young men will enter the Army joyfully when, having already acquired the necessary drill and discipline, that preliminary drudgery of barrack-square drill will be no longer necessary after they have joined the Regulars. Their early time in the Army will then be employed in real battle-training and camp-life, which will attract thousands of gallant fellows who have been hitherto kept out of the Army by dread of the goose-step and the pipeclay. And, more important still, desertion will be marvellously reduced when our boys have learnt the alphabet of military duty before they enter the Army. Our military and naval efficiency ultimately rests on the number and quality of the men and women of England, and I can at least claim that I have not spoken without some study of the town and country population of this and other lands. In 1877, I wrote officially to the Admiralty to point out the necessity there was, even then, for mechanics and firemen in the Navy to have thorough military training. Twenty-five years' further experience has only confirmed my conviction that universal military training is the best foundation for our physical and moral well-being, for our agricultural and manufacturing efficiency, and for our colonising enterprises.

Major A. C. YATE (29th (Duke of Connaught's Own) Baluch Infantry):—I welcome Mr. Stoe's proposition, if only on the ground of the national benefit of providing military employment for the "unemployed." Firstly, as a means of relieving the country of a portion of the pauper incubus: and, secondly, as a method of weaning from illness and possible vice, and utilising a percentage, at least, of those who contribute nothing at present to the welfare of the nation. While the poor rates are very heavy, the labour market congested, and the supply of recruits for the Army unequal to the demand, we are brought face to face with the fact that a considerable proportion of the manhood of the land are either living idly on some small so-called "competency" or living by their wits. It is this portion of our manhood which I contend we are "on principle," justified in making liable to compulsory military service. I say "on principle," because I do not think that it is possible to look deeper into the matter without recognising that the application of the principle will at once give rise to serious difficulties in

relation to that appanage of British birthright, "the liberty of the subject." In speaking of the "unemployed" classes, we usually think of those who live from hand to mouth; but I would suggest that the application of the term should be extended also to those who possess the means of livelihood, but who have no calling or occupation of any kind. The State has a right to exact from each one of its citizens some form of contribution whether in work or money. Those who follow a recognised profession, trade, or employ fulfil this requirement, as also do those whose extensive possessions at once demand the attention of their owners and contribute largely to the revenues of the land. But there are a great many young men, who, without being a burden on the State contribute to its resources nothing tangible either by service, by payment of tax, or by assuming the responsibilities of married life. It is this portion of our manhood which I think should, as well as the pauper unemployed, be liable to compulsory service. The existence of this section of the community is due, in some measure at least, to the indifference of parents and guardians to the duty of providing their sons or wards with a sound education and a definite aim and occupation in life. It has become the fashion of recent years to attack our public school system, but in my opinion the fault lies not so much with the generally excellent moral, mental, and physical training of those schools as with the neglect of parents and guardians to supplement that training by forethought and attention on their own part. The liability of young men to a State inflicted penalty of service or money would be a useful reminder to parents of their duty in this respect. If it were known that every young man—say from 18 to 23 years of age—who could not be shown to be either studying for or practising a profession, or trade, or recognised employment would be liable, either to compulsory military service or to the payment of a money contribution in lieu thereof, both parents and guardians as well as sons and wards would think twice before they exposed themselves to paying this tribute of service or gold. Again, if men from, say, 23 to 30 years of age, found to be without occupation, were liable to a similar call on their services or their pockets, most would find in this a strong incentive to obtaining some definite employ. The objections to the introduction of any such law which suggest themselves to me are these:—Firstly, that young men who would otherwise do nothing would seek to evade the incidence of the law by nominally adopting or qualifying for some calling which they would not actually practice. Secondly, that the increased number of young men forced into professions, etc., would increase, instead of relieving competition, and crowd the ranks of such professions to overflowing. Thirdly, that the means of evading such a law are so numerous that it would become a dead letter. My reply to these objections is, firstly, that all professions, arts, trades, and occupations possess in themselves powers, active and passive, of controlling and checking overcrowding, and that those powers would in self-defence be exercised by each such profession, art, trade, and occupation; secondly, that military service in the Regular or Irregular forces of the Crown for national defence is not a duty so repulsive that many young men would resort to extraordinary measures to evade it; and, thirdly, that there are ample and efficient means of preventing evasion. Furthermore, the right-thinking section of the community would always support such a law, knowing that it was for the national as well as for the individual good; while many parents and guardians would welcome it as relieving them from the tutelage of those whose present and future was to them a source of grave anxiety. There is little doubt that compulsory service would save many a young man from drifting to the bad. If, on the other hand, those responsible preferred to purchase exemption—and the price of exemption should be fixed at a sum calculated, I suggest, on the basis of the value to the State of at least three years'

colour service with the Regular or twelve years' service in the Irregular forces—the money so paid would provide a substitute. This, I understand, is the principle of compulsory service in Switzerland, which has been already advocated by Mr. G. C. Coulson. As to the pauper unemployed, it is sufficiently apparent that physical disability only would disqualify or exempt them. Sir Robert Giffen, I remember, in concluding the interesting remarks with which he opened the discussion on Mr. Shee's lecture, gave it as his opinion that our unemployed classes would be found to contain few men fit for service in the Army. I would venture, however, to suggest a means by which the standard of physique of those classes may be raised, or rather by which it may be prevented from sinking to the low level which now characterises it. I propose to take the male children—if not the female also—of the pauper unemployed and bring them up in State-aided schools. We have in Dr. Barnardo's Homes and in our Industrial and Reformatory Schools a sample of a system capable of wide extension, and which would seem to promise relief to the poverty and reform to the depravity of "the submerged tenth." The State has a right to interfere when parents are either unknown or non-existent, or conspicuously fail in their duty. Those Homes and Schools now existing send hundreds, nay thousands, of young men into the ranks of our Army. The Report on Reformatory Schools for 1901 showed that more than 2,500 lads from those schools were serving as soldiers in South Africa, and that some of them had specially distinguished themselves. The Newport Market Training School sent 700, and another school, inspected in 1900 by the then Duke of York, 300 soldiers to the same war. There is little doubt that such institutions as the Duke of York's and Royal Hibernian Schools save many a soldier's boy from drifting into the gutter, and if our law so willed it we could raise tens of thousands of pauper boys from the gutter and make good soldiers of them. For all lads so brought up and educated in State (*not* Board) schools military or naval service should be compulsory, and on the completion of their term of service Governmental or private employment should be found for them, provided their characters are satisfactory. No doubt this proposal will be met by the stereotyped objection based on "the liberty of the subject." In reply I would urge that this State interference with so-called "liberty" means the rescue of thousands from a depraved life, the reduction of the poor rates, the strengthening of our military forces, the diminution of crime, and a contribution, on however small a scale, to the general improvement of the people. The ardent advocates of compulsory service may as well bear in mind, however cogent their arguments and patriotic their motives, that the spirit of the nation is not yet ripe for *universal* military service. Let them then be content with what is within their reach. They see that the Regular, Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteer forces of the Crown stand at a strength (excluding the forces of the Crown Colonies and the Native Army of India) of about 900,000 men. They see that the military training of our boyhood has taken firm root in the Public, Voluntary, Board, and other Primary and Secondary Schools of the land. They must be aware, if they study their subject thoroughly, of what the Lords' Drill Association has already achieved, and of the terms of approval in which the Prince of Wales publicly expressed himself at the Mansion House regarding the military training of boys as witnessed by himself in all the colonial schools. The military spirit of our schools has extended to, or is reciprocated by, our universities, and has evinced itself throughout the country in the formation of more than 200 rifle clubs, and in gifts of money, such as Mr. Astor's £10,000, and of sites for rifle ranges. We have in these facts the evidence of a strong voluntary movement, and the nucleus of a very large Army available not only for home defence, but also for service abroad. In 1800, when the population of England and Wales was about

10,000,000, the forces available for home defence, Regular, Irregular, and Reserve, exceeded 3,250,000 of men. There was in those days no such definite system of military training in force as now exists; while the population of England and Wales has since then more than trebled. The inference is obvious. I am far from wishing to join myself with those who have endeavoured to draw from the South African War the conclusion that the strict drill and discipline of our Regular Army is no longer a necessity. Still we cannot but recognise that in the high education and intelligence of those who form our Irregular forces we have a factor which makes up in some measure for want of precise military training. The advantages that accrue to a nation from the disciplining of its young manhood on military principles may be realised by the voluntary methods which I have mentioned in detail, without withdrawing our young men, even temporarily, from the pursuit of those trades and professions which they intend to follow throughout life, and on their proficiency, on which depends, especially in these days of growing foreign competition, the prosperity of the Empire. But, undeniably, we do want to utilise those who, by reason of the indolence, indifference, or other inherent defects of their character; or, owing to the apathy, or incompetency of their natural guardians, tend to drift into the condition of doing absolutely nothing for the good of their country. The introduction of so far-reaching a measure as compulsory military service must surely be in the form of some tentative steps, some adaptation of the thin end of the wedge. Can we begin better than by employing the unemployed? If the needs of the nation demand it, universal military service will follow in due course; meanwhile, many will certainly continue to accept, not cavil at, the decision of His Majesty's responsible advisers that the nation is not yet ripe for it, and the time for it not yet come.

Lient.-Colonel E. GUNTER, *p.s.c.* (late East Lancashire Regiment):—The importance of the question that the lecturer has brought before us may be gathered from the fact that it has been two or three times the subject of discussion in this Institution within the last 25 years. It has never been of greater gravity than now, for its reconsideration has been forced upon us by the events of the last two years, which form an epoch in our military history. I support the lecturer in his view that it is the first and most sacred duty of every able-bodied Briton to give his personal service in aid of the defence of his country, and that to make this service effectual he must be trained to arms, so that he may be ready to play his part when called upon. Notwithstanding the patriotic services so nobly and voluntarily rendered by our Auxiliary Forces at various times, and especially during the present war in South Africa, I think it has been proved that voluntary effort alone cannot guarantee our national security. It is not sufficient to rely on this alone for the defence and maintenance of this great Empire. Our increased responsibilities necessitate, more than ever, a large and well-trained force for home defence not liable to fluctuation in numbers owing to difficulties of recruiting, and quickly available on emergency. The absence of a well-organised force of this description is a constant temptation to foreign admirals and generals to discuss our weakness: and as we have seen, even recently, to plan invasions of England, which may be carried into effect in case we meet with serious disasters abroad. To obtain *with certainty* such a home defence force as is required, nothing short of the systematic training and organisation of *the whole manhood of the nation* will, in my opinion, suffice, so that in imminent national danger or great emergency, the Government may be unhampered by anxiety as to the required numbers of men being forthcoming, and that it may be unnecessary to lavish millions to fill the vacant ranks. The training, organisation, and

conditions of service of our gallant Volunteers make them unsuitable for the nucleus of our home defence force, though they are, individually, brave, intelligent, and full of zeal. Moreover, it is unfair that the burden of defence should fall on a portion only of the nation. To set free the Regular Forces who may be all required abroad (but not to lessen their numbers) a great national reserve is required for home defence. To create this our splendid Militia should be brought to a war strength of at least 200,000 men, and for this purpose military training should be made obligatory on all young men not otherwise rendering personal naval or military permanent service, from the age of 18 to 30. A law to this effect allowing only the fewest possible exemptions should be passed and enforced. Systematic training is necessary. It would be of the greatest value to the nation, as has been before said, by mitigating class distinctions, encouraging mutual reliance and sympathy, and inculcating habits of order, patience, endurance, and subordination, and of benefit to the young men of all classes themselves. I agree in general with the scheme proposed for carrying out this *national training*, but venture to ask whether, instead of being obliged to put in a whole year's continuous service between the ages of 18 and 23, every man could not be given at 18 the *option* of either doing this or of spreading his training over three consecutive years?—that is, training for 60 (or 56) days in each year from the age of 18 to 21, inclusive, with any Regular or Militia force, most convenient to his place of residence, being required to obtain from the commanding officer, at the end of this term, a *certificate of efficiency*. After this he could be enrolled in successive classes of the reserve of the Militia, somewhat as proposed by the lecturer, but going out for training in camp one month in each year till 30 years old. Any further service after this should be voluntary, except in case of invasion, when any man under the age of 45 should be liable to be called out for training and service. This proposed option would, I think, be to many, a more acceptable plan, as young men would not have their studies or other work broken into for so long a period. The two months' training in each of the three years of their early manhood would be looked upon by many as a welcome change of motion, though not, we will hope, as rest. Training in each year makes forgetting what has been at first learnt less likely than when longer intervals are allowed. To ensure efficient training in six months, battalion drill, marching past, and other ceremonial must give way to shooting, skirmishing, and outpost work, etc., and efficient officers must be provided. As every man would have to serve as an officer or a soldier (as defined by Military Law), this would not be difficult. An examination, literary and military, as now for Line commissions, should be passed, and candidates should be attached for training to Line battalions before being granted Militia commissions, for which they might be nominated as now. I thoroughly support the lecturer in his advocacy of compulsory physical training of lads in schools of all classes. Such training, and properly regulated and taught gymnastics, from the age of 12 to 14, supplemented by a further course of elementary military training, and rifle drill and practice where practicable, form the basis of any sound system of national defence. The Government will doubtless see their way eventually to lending arms and instructors to facilitate this. Meanwhile, I hope all present will support Lord Meath's "Lads' Drill Association," to bring about this desirable object. There are other advantages of universal military training, such as the probable lessening of desertion, etc., which time does not admit of touching on, but the greater national security obtainable thereby, and its making for peace, must be patent to all. Its value to the physical and moral development of the youth and manhood of this great Empire must be equally plain, and every good citizen should be proud to accept the obligation of personal service for home defence.

Mr. SHEE, in reply, said:—It would really be difficult for me to express the deep sense of my gratitude for the way in which this Institution and those who have done me the honour to attend the lecture and the discussion, have received my proposals. I came here an unknown man, and certainly with no *locus standi* or right to speak on such vital matters as those which we have discussed—no right at any rate gained by such services as those of many who have been present; not only by those who have been in favour of the principle I have advocated, but also by those who have been against it, I have been treated with the utmost courtesy and kindness, and my proposals have been received with respect by those who are themselves experts on the subject.

With regard to the objections advanced in the course of these three discussions, it is obvious that it would be quite impossible for me to answer them all; but if I can satisfactorily answer the most difficult, I think it will be believed that I should not find the others very formidable. The objections may be divided into those of principle and those of detail. Those of principle are, perhaps, best represented by the one brought forward by Sir John Colomb and Admiral Fremantle, one which practically represents the "Navy only" argument. They hold that we only require a Navy for this Empire, and that, having the Navy, we require no home defence Army. If I may be allowed to complete the argument of Sir John Colomb and Admiral Fremantle, I think it would be that, if our Navy failed, there is nothing more to be done, and that we should be immediately starved into surrender. Now, I believe I am not a whit behind Sir John Colomb or the gallant admiral in holding most strenuously that we want and must have a supreme Navy. Sir John Colomb objects to my use of the term "a strong Navy"; if he likes, I will say a "supreme Navy"—as strong a Navy as we possibly can have. I used the words "strong Navy" to indicate the necessity of a supreme Navy. Where, I think, Sir John Colomb and those of his school fail is, that they do not push this argument home to its logical conclusion. If they believe we only require a Navy, then we must abolish *all* home defence forces, because we have no need for them. Now, if—and it is a very big *if*—we could be sure of securing such a Navy as would practically represent an impregnable wall round these islands, I should say abolish the Militia, the Yeomanry, the Volunteers—in fact, all home defence forces. But I think that no student of history, watching the growing power and the growing numbers of all the Navies of the world, can maintain for a moment that we shall ever again be able to maintain such a position for our Navy. I hold that we must make our Navy equal not only to a two-Power, but to a three-Power standard. But I believe we cannot possibly see the British Navy again in such a position of supremacy as it was a hundred years ago. Captain Mahan, the greatest authority on the Navy, tells us that in 1801 "the British Navy was superior to the combined forces of all Europe." Now I ask all the naval and military experts here, Is it likely we should ever be able to produce a Navy to that standard again? That Navy cost, in relation to the commerce of that time, what would represent now £120,000,000 sterling a year. Can we spend £120,000,000 sterling a year on the Navy alone? ("Yes.") Perhaps we can. If we can, we must certainly do it; but, I think, even if we did, it would not give us a Navy *absolutely* secure and free from all risk of disaster. You have to take chances into consideration in preparing for war. It only requires a combination of three or four naval Powers to put us at once into a position of complete inferiority. Even apart from the question of numbers, our Navy is now, relatively, in a far worse position than it was then. There have been the introduction of steam and an advance in machinery, whereby the engineer has become more important, and the sailor—*quâ* sailor—less so; and there are many

considerations which tend to discount those qualities which enabled us to win against superior numbers in the past, namely, British seamanship and training. We are now much more on a level with our possible foes. I am not aware that the English engineer is superior to the French, Japanese, American, or German engineers. We have now to consider that numbers tell. Having in view the present competition in naval programmes, the idea that we can ever produce a Navy equal in its relative position to that which we had at the beginning of the nineteenth century can scarcely be entertained. And if we had such a Navy, there would be always the risk of a naval disaster, or of such encounters which often happened in the Dutch wars, when there was an undecided struggle, some ships being sent to the bottom and others having to repair, so that the sea was for a moment free. The immediate result would be, nowadays, the landing of an Army on these shores. There is a certain school who say that no foreigner would dream of sending an Army to England, because they would find it much easier to starve us out; on the other hand, another group of experts hold that it is impossible to blockade these islands, and that though food would rise in price, we could never be starved. From considerable study of foreign nations and conversations with foreign military and naval men, I can assure you that neither Germany nor France will wait for the slow hazard of starvation. That is not their way in war. They will strike, and strike at once, by landing a strong force on these islands; and that force we must be able to meet and crush at once.

Again, it is perfectly obvious that even the supreme Navy we should like to have cannot *finish* a war. The Navy is the shield and the Army the lance, and we require behind the Navy and Regular Army a reservoir of men who can reinforce that Army to any extent and strike at the enemy in his own country. That is the only way to finish a war and bring our enemy to his knees. Sir John Colomb and those who think with him appear to believe that the sinews of war are ships and money. I say that the sinews of war are ultimately not money, not even ships, but *men*. If we had a Navy such as I have just described—but the realisation of which nowadays I believe to be impossible—we should still have to *man* that Navy and have reserves for that Navy, and at the present moment we have not the reserves even for the Navy as it stands. We have a force of about 120,000 men on the Active List and a Naval Reserve of about 25,000. I am glad to hear from the gallant admiral that our ships have apparently their full complements in peace-time; but it is not what I had gathered from my study of the matter. It is perfectly obvious that a reserve of 25,000 for an active list of 120,000 is quite inadequate. Coming now to detailed criticism of my proposals, I may say that I am not in the least wedded to the details of my scheme. It was attacked just now by one of the best experts of the day, Sir Ralph Knox, and it has been attacked by others. I felt obliged to bring forward some scheme, because if I had merely advocated a principle it would have been said, "It is all very well to advocate the principle; but give us something approaching a practical plan." Therefore, after a very thorough study of the systems of all the foreign Powers, who have—most of them—only adopted compulsory military service within the last thirty or forty years, I proposed a scheme which possesses, I think, some advantages. It is simple, because it abolishes the heterogeneous and overlapping system of Volunteers, Militia, Yeomanry, and so on, with different standards of efficiency, so that no one can know who is really worth his salt as a defender of his country, and who is merely "a man with a rifle." It would give us a trained force of so many hundred thousand men—trained *men*, and not *boys*. Sir Howard Vincent and some other speakers, with a traditional affection for the voluntary system, pointed with great pride to the fact that we have something

like 800,000 men in arms somewhere and somehow. But I would ask you—although I need not ask those who have had some experience of recruiting—what is the quality of many of these men? We know perfectly well that something like one-third are mere boys, quite untrained and unfit physically for the hardships of a soldier's life in time of peace, much less for the hardships of war. The scheme I propose would at least give you *men*.

If Sir Ralph Knox had done me the honour to read my book, he would have seen I did not propose that the foreign service army should be permanently exiled abroad. The soldiers in that army would be doing their seven years' service abroad as they do now, only they would be sent out as men fit to bear the duties and fatigues of a hot climate at the ages of 21 or 22, and not as they often are now—though not officially—(see "The Briton's First Duty," p. 69, note) at 18 or 19.

Sir Ralph Knox suggested that, for some reasons of my own, I had tried to reduce the number of men available at the age of 20 from 350,000 to 250,000, and he thinks that I have made far too high an allowance for rejections on physical grounds.

Now, though my information leads me to the conclusion that a much greater number than 30,000 would be rejected as physically unfit out of a total of 380,000, I have nowhere suggested that 100,000 would be so rejected. But, in analysing my figures, Sir Ralph Knox has quite forgotten to allow for the whole of the men who at 20 would have enlisted or be enlisting in the Regular Army, and for those already serving in the Navy. I certainly think that if allowance is made for all these men—none of whom would, therefore, be available for the National Militia, naval or military—and for a proportion of rejections on physical grounds more in accordance with the *data* of Army returns, my estimate of a total of 250,000 will be found to be pretty accurate. The percentage of rejections for the last five years among recruits *voluntarily* offering themselves for service in this country (and, therefore, presumably thinking they had a chance of being accepted) works out to an average of 32·588 exactly. In other words, the rejections amount to about a third—exactly the estimate I have taken (see p. 106, "The Briton's First Duty"). Obviously, there would be a greater percentage of rejections when the whole male population passed before the scrutiny of the medical officer. The same speaker says that I put down 20,000 as the number of the long-service Army outside India ready to go anywhere and do anything. A reference to my lecture and my book will show that he has quoted me incorrectly. What I said was: "If we *add another 20,000* (to the 30,000 of the Army outside India, as the number stood before the war) I think we shall reach a fairly safe estimate, giving 50,000 as the number of 'Imperial' troops required for garrison and police duties outside India." . . . And in my lecture, as delivered, I said: "I should, however, myself prefer the number of the professional Army outside India to be 100,000. This would enable us to have two or three army corps completely ready for any emergency, and give us an ample margin for expeditionary purposes and small wars, without calling for volunteers from the younger cadres of the National Militia. If we allow for 100,000 men at £110 per head, the Army Estimates would be £23,600,000, and we should still save over £6,000,000 a year."

We should have, therefore, besides 100,000 men in the long-service Army outside India, a national Militia with a peace-footing of 210,000, together with a Naval Reserve of about 40,000; and a war-footing of over 2,000,000 men, and still save £6,000,000 a year on our present Estimates, which give us neither numbers nor efficiency. The proposal that the citizen forces should serve, as they do in every other country, for "a merely nominal remuneration" while fulfilling their first duty to the State is perfectly equitable and just, and would certainly be regarded so by the fair-mindedness of the

people of this country, from the moment they recognise that personal service for home-defence was a *duty*. But in all countries, the sole supporter of a poor family is exempted from service; and the same arrangement was proposed in my lecture, and would, of course, be adopted under a system of compulsory service in this country. On the other hand, as regards a very large number of our town-bred youths, their withdrawal from unhealthy surroundings, and their training under wholesome conditions in discipline, order, cleanliness, and self-respect would be an inestimable boon conferred upon them by the State, and would mean a great addition to their wage-earning capacity, and so to the national wealth. For the rest, I can state from the experience of many years' residence abroad, that the poorer classes do not in any way regard the military service demanded of them—needlessly long and arduous though it is in many cases—as a burthen or an injustice.

To return to the subject of some of the advantages which would follow from the adoption of my proposals, my scheme would facilitate that which all Army reforms have, in one way or another, tried to secure, that is, territorial organisation, the recruiting of men from the land they belong to, which gives *esprit de corps* and feeling of brotherhood and friendliness, which is so valuable in all Armies. Again, it would give us a reserve for the Navy. I think it was Admiral Sir Nathaniel Bowden-Smith who had some doubts whether we should get a very efficient reserve by my scheme. At any rate, I would point out that we should get a man with one year's training to start with and a reserve-training to follow; whereas now the training has been reduced to 9 months, for the simple reason that we cannot get the reserve-men under the old condition of 15 months' training. So that at least it would provide an ample Naval Reserve, a fact which I would particularly bring to the notice of naval men.

One of the most important questions was whether my scheme would affect recruiting adversely. I cannot altogether understand such a question being asked. We have at the present moment hundreds of thousands of men coming forward as Volunteers and Yeomanry. Those men are glad to do something for their country, however little it may be under the circumstances. Is it likely that if we train the whole manhood of the country to do their duty and make them feel it a privilege to serve the fatherland in arms, when the time came for that service to be needed they would hang back? We should have all those men who now come forward, and we should give a military tone to, and awaken the martial ardour of, many who are not aware that they possess it.

Most important perhaps of all was the grave question asked as to whether my scheme, or anything approaching to my scheme, would provide men for foreign service? I have said in my lecture and in my book that it might be made obligatory on the younger classes of the Militia Reserve to serve in time of war. Even supposing we did not lay the *obligation* on the home defence soldier to serve in time of war, it is perfectly obvious that if we have trained the whole manhood of the nation to arms they will not hang back when the call comes to fight abroad in a national war. Seeing that untrained men have come forward in thousands during this war prepared to do their best—but, unfortunately, in many cases useless for the purpose—it would be strange indeed if when we had the whole manhood of the country trained they did not come forward. I think, therefore, there would be no difficulty whatever in providing the number of men for a national emergency. In Germany, I believe, during the Chinese war, 120,000 men came forward immediately. For a war which merely appealed to a spirit of adventure 120,000 young men were pleased to do a little fighting away from home. If that spirit of adventure was enough to call forth such men in times of peace, when no patriotic effort or feeling was aroused, what would be the case in England

if we were at war with a great foreign Power and our existence were at stake? I say that our men would come forward in hundreds of thousands, and they would be *trained* men. As for the objection that conscript soldiers will not fight well, it is perhaps almost too absurd to be dealt with. Conscript soldiers have fought magnificently in every age of the world. We need not go back to Greece and Rome. We can refer to the Russians at Plevna, to the Turks, and to the war of 1870, in which thousands laid down their lives gladly for their country. Nor need we go so far as Germany. We need only refer to our own history, when men were taken by a conscription of a most cruel kind, knocked on the head and carried aboard ship, to fight the French on the sea. What did those men do when they met the enemy? They fought like lions. Under a system of universal military service there would be nothing of that kind. Every man would be serving his country in an honourable way with his neighbour and brother; and to think those men would not fight when it came to a national cause is to deny history and cast a slur on the human race. I was glad to find that there were few indeed who hold that to ask one year of a man's life between the ages of 18 and 23 was a tyranny and a horrible oppression. Sir Howard Vincent thought that, and that our success in commerce and intellectual activity had been due to our freedom from universal service. I can only ask him. In what does our superiority at present consist? If it is in athletics, I admit it at once; we are certainly superior in athletic sports. But when it comes to the serious questions of trade, commerce, industry, science, art, in their most complete and finished forms, especially such a science as that of winning battles, I think we find that France and Germany have not lost anything in those powers of mind which make a nation great in those matters. I am perfectly certain that such a year's service would be invaluable to us, because we should add to what I think is the superior intelligence of the English people over the Germans, that training and discipline which we utterly lack at the present moment.

With regard to the fact to which I draw attention, that Germany had made immense strides since her adoption of compulsory service, General Sterling doubted whether it could be attributed to compulsory service, because he said, Are we afraid of Russia, of Italy, or of France? It is very easy to answer that query. Those countries have only adopted compulsory military service recently—Germany has had it for nearly 100 years. But in proportion to the length of time those countries have adopted service by so much have they advanced in commerce and prosperity. I have a letter here from an English engineer in Russia who is not a naval or a military man. He has watched the progress of Russian industry in the last few years. It is well known to those who study the matter that Russia has made prodigious strides in industrial enterprise, so that capital is pouring into Russia from this country and the United States in order to feed the growing industries. This gentleman says in his letter that he has no doubt whatever that in a few years time the Russian workmen will be a formidable competitor to the American and the German. And he attributes that solely to the fact that in Russia there is universal military service, which has been only adopted for the last twenty years. It is the same with regard to Italy and France. I can point to Sir John Aird's remarks on the magnificent work done by the Italian workmen at Assouan, men who had been through the compulsory military service in Italy. It certainly cannot be denied that America is making huge strides without compulsory service. That is perfectly true. But in what sort of position is America? Look at her enormous advantages. She has thousands of square miles of virgin soil on which she easily produces the necessaries of life. She has a political system by which anyone can rise to be President, a tremendous incentive to strenuous individual effort.

Wages are very high, and, therefore, there is every incentive to invention. In fact, they have every advantage possible ; a young nation full of energy and having the pick of Europe's most energetic population flowing to their shores for the last 30 or 40 years ; and it would be strange indeed if they had not been able to advance to a splendid prosperity.

With regard to universal military service as a guarantee of peace, I am glad to say that that aspect of the matter especially seems to be dawning upon thoughtful men more and more. I had a letter from a gentleman who does not give me his name, but who is apparently a lunatic ; he curses universal military service in the name of the Holy Trinity, and says he will not serve, and asks me to pay the postman ! Though he expresses himself more forcibly than I do, I hate jingoism and aggressiveness quite as much as he does, and I am in favour of universal military service essentially as a peace policy and as a policy which has commended itself not only to the Bishop of Chester, a great dignitary of the Church, but also to Mr. Samuel Smith, M.P., the foremost advocate of peace in this country. In fact, all who love and honour their country must love peace above all, but we believe in a peace such as that described by President Roosevelt, a peace granted to a strong man armed, not that flung in contempt to a weakling and a coward. We have one great advantage in facing this question, that it is a question far above the realm of party, and I trust it will be always so ; for it appeals to the Conservative on the lines of old tradition, on the lines of the constitution of this country ; and it appeals to the Liberal in so far as it tends to the amelioration of the lot of the masses. It should appeal to Radicals, because it is essentially a radical measure ; for it is one which makes all equal in the burdens which they bear for their country. It should appeal to the Labour Party for the reasons we have heard in the course of the debate. It appeals to the Labour Party in Switzerland because it gives them improvement in morale and in physique.

As many speakers have pointed out in the course of this discussion, we are now at a very critical period of our history. We seem to be at last reaching the limit of that expansion which has gone on for three centuries, and we are finishing building up an Empire such as has never been seen in the history of the world, and which requires the support and the patriotism of all in this country and in our Colonies to uphold it. It is perfectly certain that the envious eyes of all nations are upon us, and that sooner or later we shall be attacked, and attacked with vigour, attacked by something very different from the small nation of conscript farmers we have been dealing with in this war. We shall deal with the skilled and trained minds and bodies of highly civilised European nations. I think the time has come, therefore, for us to rise to this great idea of a sacrifice for our country. I quite agree with one speaker that it is a privilege rather than a sacrifice. Still, it is from the point of view of many also a sacrifice, because it takes a certain time from a man's life. But I think the time has come to bring this sacrifice, and if we rise to it we shall earn the gratitude of succeeding generations, and give the lie for centuries to come to the belief that there must be growth, culmination, and *decay* in the lives of nations. Whereas if we refuse this moderate sacrifice, succeeding generations of our countrymen will point the finger of scorn at us, as at a nation which, while willing to enjoy the fruits of greatness, selfishly refused to acknowledge the responsibilities which that greatness implies.

The CHAIRMAN (Major Lord Newton) :—I believe, as I have said before, it is customary for the Chairman to sum up the discussion, but I think it will be just as well if I spare you that infliction. I cannot, however, help remarking that

it has been a singularly one-sided discussion. The arguments advanced against the principle of compulsion may be divided into three heads: First, the Count Sternberg argument; secondly, the argument that compulsion would lead to the complete cessation of Volunteering; and, thirdly, the political argument, if I may so summarise it. With regard to the first argument, I hope I shall not be accused of disrespect to Count Sternberg if I decline to treat him very seriously. He was an officer who, I believe, saw a very moderate amount of fighting, who was fortunate or unfortunate enough to be taken prisoner by the British forces. When I see the opinion of some unknown British subaltern quoted either in defence of or in opposition to some well-established Continental military system, then I shall be prepared to accept the opinion of Count Sternberg. With regard to the second argument, I merely desire to point out this fact. I would remind you that it was necessary to despatch an international expedition to China, and I believe I am correct in saying that the Germans had no less than five times as many men than were required who volunteered for this purpose. I would also ask those persons who believe that compulsion prevents volunteering, to explain how it is that the French obtain men for their Colonial Army. With regard to what I term the political side of the question, we have had that put forward by Colonel Sir Howard Vincent. I do not know that it is quite fair to quote one M.P. against another, but I cannot refrain from commenting upon the fact that I received a letter from another M.P., in which he said, "I think after all there must be something in what you advocate, because I noticed that Colonel Sir Howard Vincent is against you." I only quote that statement, which is perhaps not altogether a fair thing to do, in order to show that Members of Parliament are not unanimous on this point, and we have had an example, I am happy to say, of it to-day. It comes to this: are we really going to put the question of what an M.P. is to put in his election address before the safety and interests of the country? I have been an M.P. myself, and I know a good deal about the House of Commons, and something about election addresses too. The duty of sensible and intelligent persons is to show the necessity for the particular reform which has been advocated in this room, and in course of time to convert, if possible, Members of Parliament and other persons who are reluctant to face the truth. That is all I have to say on the subject, but I hope that this meeting will be productive of some good: and I shall always esteem it an honour to think that I was selected for the purpose of occupying the Chair. Before I conclude, I should like to say that I consider the thanks of everybody are due to Mr. Shee for initiating a most interesting and instructive discussion. I think we cannot express ourselves as being too highly indebted to him.

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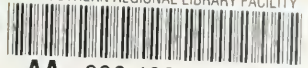
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